

**THE APOSTOLIC
CHURCH** 

REV. A. B. SIMPSON

L. P. Kelcham



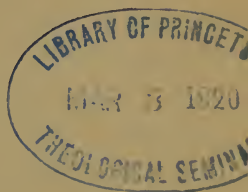
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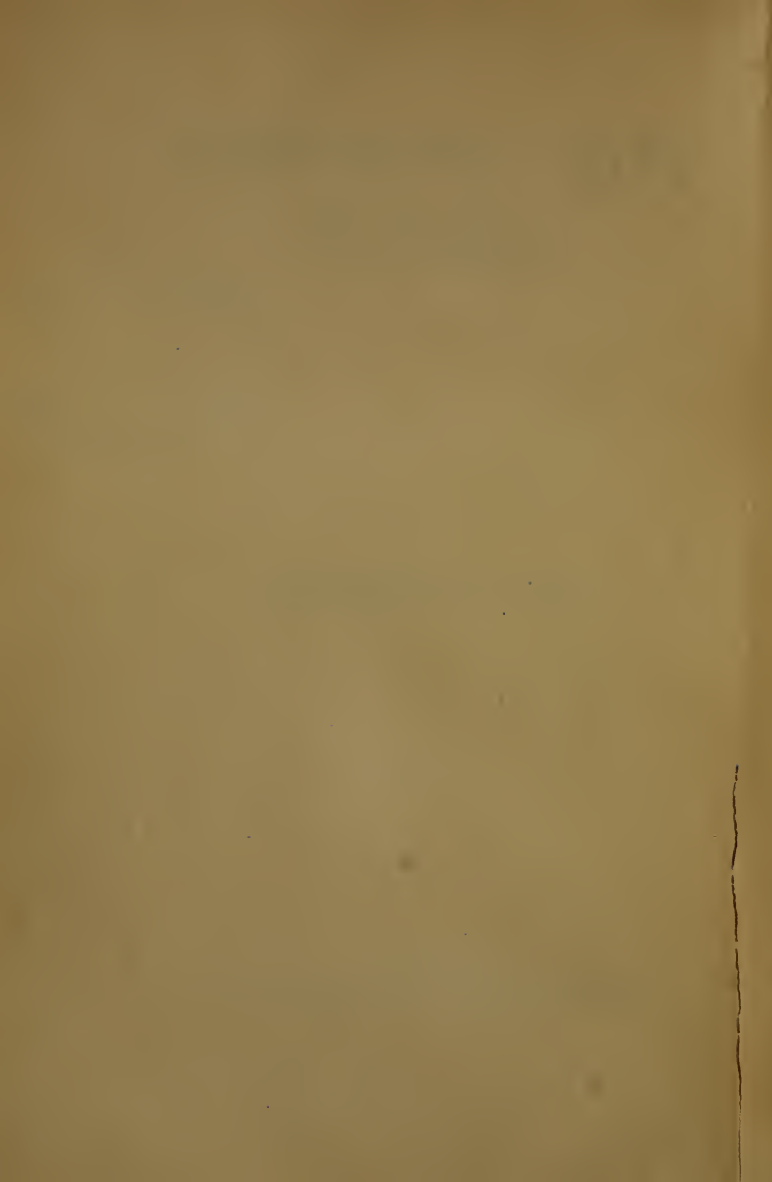
BY

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INTRODUCTION.

The first epistle to the Corinthians deals largely with the principles and life of the Church of Christ. It is a picture at once of Christ's ideal for His Church and the Church's failure to meet it. But the very fault of this particular church were overruled in God's providence as occasions for the profound teachings of the Holy Spirit respecting the true character, government and work of the Church. We have, therefore, in this epistle an outline for an apostolic Christian Church in its unity, purity, discipline, government, life, work, worship and glorious destiny. May these Outlines be used of the Holy Ghost to help us individually and collectively more perfectly to realize that divine ideal in our life and work.

UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

“Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? . . . Therefore let no man glorify in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.” I. Cor. i. 12, 13; iii. 21, 22.

HE Church in Corinth had a most providential and even romantic inception. Sent by a special divine commission to Greece, the apostle had preached the Gospel in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Athens amid much persecution, and finally arrived at Corinth, the great metropolis of commerce and culture.

His work at first was greatly hindered by the opposition of the Jews, and he seems to have written to his friends in Thessalonica to pray for him that the Word of God might have free course and be glorified in this difficult field.

(II. Thess. iii. 1.) The prayer was answered in a most signal way.

First, the Jews bitterly opposed him, and so opposed him that he withdrew from them and turned to the Gentiles, beginning his work in the house of Justus, adjoining the Jewish synagogue. This was followed by a great outpouring of the Spirit of God, so that Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed, and many of the Corinthians also believed and were baptized.

Then God spoke to Paul in a special vision saying, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee; and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." All this was wonderfully fulfilled in the apostle's immediate experience, and for a year and a half he continued teaching the Word of God among them.

Then the Jews made another frantic effort to destroy his work, and when Gallio, the new Roman governor, came into office they brought charges against Paul, hoping to take advantage of his ignorance or weakness, but with true Roman indifference Gallio refused to entertain

their petty theological strifes, and before Paul needed to answer a single charge the complaint was dismissed and his accusers were driven from the judgment seat. Then the mob turned upon the defeated Jews, and beat their ruler, Sosthenes, unmercifully.

It would almost seem from a little coincidence that Sosthenes may have been compelled to appeal to Paul's friends for protection. At least we know what treatment he would have received if he had done so. At any rate, either this or some other Sosthenes was converted to Christ at Corinth, and when Paul wrote the letter to the Corinthian church he associated Sosthenes with himself in the greetings of the epistle. It would indeed be a fine touch of divine irony and a glorious revenge for the apostle if Sosthenes had been truly converted from an enemy to a friend, from the man that sought to destroy them into the associate of Paul himself in the oversight of the little church at Corinth.

From the apostle's letter to this church we are able to form a very good idea of its condition. Living as they did in a city of extraordinary wealth and culture, they were remarkable for

their intelligence and for the extent and variety of the gifts of the Spirit which they exemplified, but we do not find the same recognition or commendation of the graces of the Spirit. It seems probable that their intellectual culture was far in advance of their spiritual culture, and the result was a condition of sectarian strife and division which drew from the apostle the most earnest and affectionate admonitions and appeals, and which became at length the occasion for the most sublime picture of the supremacy of love which the Holy Scriptures contain.

Let us notice at this time some interesting and instructive points connected with the membership and gifts of the Corinthian church, and more especially the unity of that church.

I. The membership of the Church. They are described first as those "that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." This refers no doubt to our standing with Jesus Christ as those who are set apart as belonging to Him, and who are recognized by God as saved and sanctified through the purchase of His redemption and by virtue of their standing in Him. Every believer who

has become truly united to Christ is recognized by the Father as one with Christ in all the fullness of His grace. When we take Him by the initial act of faith we take Him in all His fullness, and we are accepted in Him and recognized as one with Him even in the things which have not yet been realized in our experience. Therefore we are recognized by God as not only crucified with Christ, but risen with Him, and even sitting with Him in heavenly places.

All this has not yet come into our actual experience, but all this belongs to us by right of our redemption and union with our glorious Head. We are therefore spoken of as "sanctified in Christ Jesus."

But, secondly, they are next described as those that are "called to be saints." We are to enter in personally and experimentally to all which belongs to us by right. We are to be saints in our hearts and lives, and live up to the high standing which we have in Christ Jesus.

There is a miner who has found a piece of ore richly veined with gold, but still mingled with coarse rock and sand. He takes it to some wealthy assayer or dealer in the precious min-

erals and offers it for sale. The man examines it and knows its mixed condition, but knowing also its inherent value he purchases it perhaps for several hundred dollars, and it becomes his property. Then he puts it through the processes of the mill, crushing it, washing it, melting it and refining it until at last it flows out a stream of unalloyed gold worth five times what he paid for it, without a particle of mingled rock or sand. It is much cleaner now than when he purchased it, but it is not any more his own now than it was then. It belonged to him in its mingled state; it belongs to him still, but it has been cleansed, separated and prepared for its true use.

This describes the two processes of salvation and sanctification, our standing and our state, our acceptance in the Beloved first, and then our conformity to His image later. Just because we are accepted in Him we are to press forward into all to which He has called us. This is our high calling—"called to be saints."

But, in the third place, there is still another clause which must be included in the circle of fellowship to whom the apostle addresses his

letter, "With all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, both theirs and ours." There must be no narrow sectarianism about the church in Corinth or anywhere else. It includes all who belong to Christ, and He belongs to them as much as He does to us. There is no place in the apostle's mind for denominationalism, or bigotry of any kind. Christian fellowship must in the very nature of things be as large as the whole household of faith; for the body is one, and if you restrict it you narrow yourself and cut off your own very life.

II. The gifts and graces of the Church. The apostle was able to speak in very high terms of the endowments of this church at Corinth. He attributed to all the grace of Jesus Christ, but he could honestly say of them that they had received an unusual supply of the gifts of His grace. "In everything ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance and in all knowledge so that ye come behind in no gift." Their meetings were full of bright, deeply spiritual testimonies. Their views of the truth were clear and fresh and strong. The gifts of tongues and of utter-

ance and even of miracles were widely prevalent and strongly marked in their history as a church, and they were prominent among the apostolic churches for the abundance and the power of their spiritual enduements.

Then their attitude about the Lord's coming was all right. They had not settled down in worldly self-complacency, but they were waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the apostle felt sure that God would confirm them unto the end that they should be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is very high testimony, and had you or I visited this Corinthian church we would no doubt have been much impressed with its prosperity, its intelligence, its power and its brilliancy in teaching, testimony and Christian work.

III. Its lack of unity. Notwithstanding all this, there was one grave defect and cause of reproof and blame which filled the apostle's heart with deep concern and sorrow. The unity of the Church is essentially part of her constitution as the body of Christ. Just as the human body cannot be divided without death,

so schism and separation is fatal to the life of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. The system of denominationalism is essentially human, and contrary to the highest will of our glorious Head. No single doctrinal principle is important enough to displace the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as the one name that alone should dominate His Church. The fact that God has overruled and used a divided Church is no sort of reason for supposing that He approves of it. But there are far worse evils than denominationalism. Within the same denomination and congregation there are frequently greater dissensions and divisions than among the various churches and sects. It is not union but unity that God wants, and that is a matter of life and love. The true unity of the Church is broken not only by open schisms, but by social and secret strifes, strains, envyings, jealousies and grievances among the Lord's people. As sins against love, which is the supreme grace of Christianity, these are carnal signs and grievous wrongs against the body of the Lord.

One of their chief causes is the lack of sanctification. They are the evidence of a carnal

state. They all spring from the old sinful nature, whereas the apostle says: "There are among you envyings, strifes and divisions; are ye not carnal and walk as men?" By another figure he describes them as a result of immaturity and an infantile condition. "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto babes in Christ."

Again, another cause of these divisions is the undue attachment to men as men; human leadership and earthly hero worship is the source of this great evil which has weakened and divided the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is altogether wrong.

The effects of division in the body of Christ are very sad.

First, they hurt the Head. Just as the scratch or wound in the feeblest member of the body at once communicates itself to the senses of the brain, so Christ is hurt by all our strains and strifes, and often He has to repeat the cry to His thoughtless children, "Why persecutest thou Me?" Full of profoundest truth as well as tenderness, was the answer of the old Scottish martyr mother as she saw little Mar-

garet Wilson, the maiden martyr of Perth, struggling and choking to death at the hands of her cruel foes in the sands of the Solway. "It is Christ," she said, "in one of His members, wrestling there."

When we wound the brethren we wound the Lord Jesus, and when the body is torn asunder the Head is caused to suffer in sympathetic pain.

Secondly, we hurt ourselves. The body is so one that the pain we inflict upon another member reflects itself upon us. There is a settled law of retribution that brings back upon the author of unkindness the reflex action of his own conduct. There is many a body that is suffering with sickness, and many a spiritual life that is dwarfed and stunted in consequence of injustice and wrong which ought long ago to have been confessed and righted.

Thirdly, we hurt the whole body of Christ. It is not the individual only that we injure, but the cause of which we are a part. Spiritual deadness of the Church of Christ is largely due to her divisions. The lack of apostolic power

has come in consequence of the severed life of spiritual organism.

Fourthly, not only do we hurt the body, but we hinder the testimony of Christ's Word before the world. The unity of the Church was designed by Him to be His most powerful witness to the unbelieving world, and the absence of this unity is the most powerful obstacle to unbelieving men in the way of their acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. Even the infidel Gibbon was forced to acknowledge that the unity of the primitive Church was a testimony to the world which they could not gainsay; but, alas! it can no longer be said today, "See how these Christians love one another!" but rather the admonition must needs be emphasized, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

How shall we cherish the spirit of unity and overcome the divisions and strifes of the children of God?

1. The supreme secret must ever be to cling closer to the Head. The nearer we come to Him the more closely will we touch each other. As the spokes of the wheel near the centre, they

grow closer to each other. As the little birdlings press up to the mother's breast, they press more closely to one another.

2. We must be filled with the Spirit. The little pools along the seashore are united when a great tidal wave sweeps along the shore, and so the baptism of the Holy Ghost alone can unite the sects and parties of divided Christendom in the full tides of the common element of their life. The absence of unity is an evidence always of a low spiritual condition, and the remedy for division is the quickening of spiritual life and the filling of the Spirit.

3. The apostle has given us a blessed remedy for the strifes and strains of Christians in the third chapter of this epistle and the twenty-first verse. "Therefore," he says, "let no man glory in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours." We are to recognize our brethren as ours. We are to make common cause with them, and so take them in that we shall feel ourselves responsible even for their very faults. Then there will be no place for rivalry,

jealousy, or separated interests. You know if your child does wrong and even greatly tries you, you feel it is your child and almost as if it were your own disgrace and failure, and instead of condemning mercilessly and throwing off the erring one, you take the fault to yourself and lovingly seek to help and to save. If another's child did the same thing you would condemn and blame and feel no such responsibility. The whole question is whose child it is. Make it yours and love immediately comes into play.

Now this is what the apostle means by recognizing not only all things as ours, but all people as ours, yea, our brethren. When therefore we see good in them we rejoice as if it were our own. When we see evil we mourn, pity, forgive and forbear and help and deal just as we would with ourselves.

It was thus that Daniel took upon himself the sins and faults of his own people and confessed them as if they were his own transgressions, and in this he was but imitating Christ, who "was made sin for us who knew no sin."

4. But finally the real secret of union is for each of us to be fully saved from the spirit of

self and strife and sin, and filled with the disposition and temper of the Lord Jesus Christ. There could be no strife if every believer was himself a Christ-filled man and baptized with the gentleness and love of the Lord Jesus. While the carnal nature is allowed to sway us we can never have real unity with one another. It is a painful confession, but it is probably one that would be re-echoed by almost all those who have had intimate dealings with a large variety of professing Christians, that there is no single line of failure and sin on the part of the children of God, especially those who confess to know something of the deeper life of the Spirit, than the infirmity of temper. The spirit of irritation, depression or sensitiveness; you may call it what you please, by the finely drawn phrase of being tried, or the more honest name of ill-nature; it is the one place where the great majority of most earnest Christians are conscious of not really living the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is better to recognize it and call it by its right name, and then with an utter surrender and unreserved confession, a single purpose and an uncompromising faith, take the

grace of God, the power of the Spirit and the indwelling life of Christ against it, and enter into an eternal covenant never again to willingly sin against love.

TEACHING OF THE CHURCH.

“Christ, the wisdom of God. I. Cor. i. 24.

“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, even righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” I. Cor. i. 30.

“Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are mature.” I. Cor. ii. 6.



THE city of Corinth was the center of Greek culture and philosophy. It is to this the apostle alludes when he speaks of the Greeks as seeking after wisdom. The word for wisdom is “sophia,” which is the base of our word philosophy. They were very proud of their sophia. The apostle comes to them with a new doctrine. He has a sophia too, but it is not like theirs. It is contrary to all human ideas and conceptions, but it is as high above the wisdom of man as the heavens are high above the earth. He unfolds it in the first and second chapters of this epistle.

I. It is a paradox and a contradiction. It is contrary to all human ideas and notions. Just as the wisdom of men is foolishness with God

so the wisdom of God is foolishness with men. They cannot understand it or appreciate it that God can have any interest in their finely-spun webs of philosophical speculation. How little God cares for things that man most highly esteems appears from the apostle's statement that God hath not called the wise men after the flesh, the mighty and noble, but He has gone out of His way to choose "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and the things which are not, to bring to naught the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence."

It is not merely that the wise and the mighty have not chosen Him, but He has not chosen them, but has passed them by intentionally, and has taken the instruments that man despises and acted contrary to all human probabilities and modes of judging.

II. It is personal. It is not a mere connection of philosophical principles and abstract ideas, but it is the revelation of a Person. Christ

is the wisdom of God. It is not a chart of the way He gives us, but it is a guide to lead us all the way. It is not a volume of ethics, but it is a true and living Friend. It is not even a new experience in our own hearts, but a real living and indwelling Christ, who comes to be to us all that we cannot be and do for us all that we are unable to do. "For of Him are ye in Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, even righteousness, sanctification and redemption." It is not that we are made wise, but Christ is made our wisdom. It is not that we are made righteous, but Christ is made our righteousness. It is not that we possess a self-contained sanctity, but Christ is made unto us sanctification. It is not that we are enabled to deliver ourselves from our circumstances and disabilities, but Christ is made unto us redemption.

Suppose that I was carrying on a business under financial difficulties and with insufficient capital. I go to a friend who is wealthy, and ask him to help me by advancing a thousand dollars. My friend listens to me, and gives me his check for the amount. But after a year I return to him, and am compelled to tell him

that I am still as much embarrassed as before, and that I am under the painful necessity of asking him to help me again, and I struggle on as before; but at last I am compelled once more to seek help, and ashamed and embarrassed I promise him that I will never ask for help again if he will once more relieve me. He looks me frankly in the face and says, "I will not help you, for my help is useless. You will again fail as you have already done." Then he gives me a kind, encouraging look and adds, "But I will tell you what I will do; I will come into your business, and I will put my brains, my experience, my credit and my boundless capital into it, and I will carry it on myself for you, and all that you will have to do will be to give me the control and then share the profits." I would be a very foolish man if I declined this generous offer. And so I hand my business over to my friend, and take him and all he has instead of his help.

That is just what Christ does for us. It is not His blessing He gives us, but Himself. The Gospel is the revelation of Jesus. The good news that God has sent us is that God Himself

has come in the person of His dear Son to be our all in all.

III. It is practical. It teaches us not idle theories, but real needs, and makes complete provision for all the most important conditions of our life.

The philosophy of Plato, the loftiest of the Grecian thinkers, had in it three great elements—namely, the true, the beautiful and the good. But of what use are these things to the human heart in the struggle with sin, sorrow and the grave? What good will it do the guilty, dying man to paint for him the vision of the true, the beautiful and the good when he is sinking in despair? He wants somebody that can comfort, forgive and save him. What use is it to that poor passion-driven soul struggling against the demon within him to hold out to him your fine-spun theories of sentiment and poetry? He wants the power that can overcome the power of sin and lead him into righteousness and peace. What use is it to a life involved in sorrow, failure and adverse circumstances to sing your golden dreams and talk in the air about the true, the beautiful and the good? He

wants some mind to help, some way of escape, some power that is stronger than himself and stronger than death. Here is where the supremacy of the divine "sophia" comes in.

A Chinaman has told us the testimony of his conversion and his acceptance of Christianity. "I was in a deep pit," he said, "sinking in the mire and helpless to deliver myself. Looking up I saw a shadow at the top, and soon a venerable face looked over the brink and said, 'My son, I am Confucius, the father of your country. If you had obeyed my teachings you would never have been here.' And then he passed on with a significant movement of his finger and a cheerless farewell, adding, 'If ever you get out of this, remember to obey my teachings.' But, alas, that did not save me and I sank deeper in the mire.

"Then Buddha came along, and looking over the edge of the pit he cried, 'My son, just count it all as nothing. Enter into rest. Fold your arms and retire within yourself and you will find Nirvana, the peace to which we all are tending.' I cried, 'Father Buddha, if you will only help me to get out I will be glad to do so.

I could follow your instructions easily if I were where you are, but how can I rest in this awful place?' Buddha passed on and left me in my despair.

"Then another face appeared. It was the face of a man beaming with kindness and bearing marks of sorrow. He did not linger a moment, but leaped down by my side, threw His arms around me, lifted me out of the mire, brought me to the solid ground above; and even then did not bid me farewell, but took off my filthy garments, put new robes upon me and bade me follow Him, saying, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' That is why I became a Christian. It was because Jesus Christ did not come to me with theories and speculations, but practical help in time of need."

And so this divine "sophia" is a complete supply for all our needs. "Christ is made unto us wisdom—that is, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." The Greek construction allows us to translate the first "and" after wisdom by the word "even." It is like a bracket containing a number of particulars under a general head. Wisdom is a generic term

including all the others, and under it the three great elements of this wisdom are righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Just as the Platonic philosophy had three things in it—namely, the true, the beautiful and the good, so the Christ sophia has in it three things—namely, justification, sanctification and complete deliverance.

1. It brings us righteousness. This has reference to our relations with God and our standing under His law. We are guilty and condemned, and we need to be right with Him.

Now, Christ has provided for this by taking the place of the guilty, bearing the penalty of his sin, obeying for his broken law and giving to us the benefit of His standing and making us “accepted in the Beloved.” In Him we are counted as if we had already died for our sins, and His righteousness and merits are imputed to us that we stand before our Judge not only forgiven, but accepted, justified and blameless even as He.

There is something in His atonement which not only satisfies God, but satisfies our conscience, and the guilty soul knows that it is

right with heaven, and looking in the face of inexorable justice it can say, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

2. The next need of our life is sanctification—that is, to be right in our own hearts and lives; to be delivered from the inherent power of sin and enabled to overcome temptation and walk in harmony with the will of God.

This, Christ also becomes to us. He who died for us lives in us. He who bestowed upon us the gift of righteousness as against our past transgressions, bestows as freely the gift of rightness for our personal life. He is made unto us sanctification, filling us with His Holy Spirit, living in us with His own pure and perfect life; He imparts to us what He had already imputed to us. His purity, His peace, His love, His patience, His long suffering, His gentleness, His courage, His strength, yes, His very faith, are inbreathed through our being and continually supplied as we abide in Him, so that we can say, "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son

of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

3. But we need redemption. This word means deliverance, and especially deliverance through a ransom. It covers all the other needs of life, deliverance from disease, deliverance from Satan's power, deliverance from circumstances, deliverance from this present evil world, deliverance at last from death itself to the full realization of the glorious resurrection.

This also comes to us in Christ. This also is included in our redemption rights, and this also is realized as we more and more fully enter into His life and receive Him into ours. By and by it will be fully consummated when death's last shackle shall be severed, and we shall rise to the glory into which He has already entered as our prototype and forerunner.

Is not this a practical message to bring to suffering, dying men? Is not this better than the dreams of philosophy and the visions of poetry? Is not this a practical and present help for wrecked humanity, and does it not seem passing strange that men will still dream on and waste their strength in the wretched

sophistries which have been long ago exploded, and which have no more power to remedy the wrongs of humanity than a butterfly has strength to lift a mountain to the skies?

IV. It is progressive. This divine "sophia," this glorious message which God has given to His Church, is too vast to be received in a moment, but it leads on into the depths and heights of God and all the possibilities of the Christian growth and maturity. And so in the second chapter of first Corinthians the apostle leads us into the deeper development of the Christian doctrine and experience. He says there are fundamental truths which are intended for beginners, but there are deeper teachings for the maturer minds. Just as the ancient philosophy had its simpler and profounder teachings, the one for the public and the other for the initiated, so Christianity has the simple Gospel for the world, and to them we are to know nothing but "Christ and Him crucified;" but "we speak wisdom among them that are mature." There are deeper truths for those who are able to understand and receive them, but, as he expresses it later, we must

adapt these to the capabilities of our hearers. The secular mind cannot understand them at all. The babes in Christ can only be fed with milk, and it is to the mature disciple alone that we can give the deeper truths of God's complete revelation, presenting "spiritual things to spiritual men."

There are three classes of minds spoken of in this passage. First, there is the natural man, while literally this might be rendered the "psychical man," or "soul man." This is the man of merely intellectual development, but he has no spiritual life. This man cannot perceive or receive the things of the Spirit of God; indeed, they are foolishness unto him. He has not the capacity to apprehend them. He would need a divine mind in order to grasp them. This is the reason why men of genius and the highest culture are often unable to apprehend the more spiritual truths of Christianity and are strangers to many of its deeper experiences.

Next, there is an infant or child stage of Christian experiences—babes in Christ, with much of the carnal mind in them. These, he tells us, cannot grasp the deeper things of God,

but they must be fed with a spoon and nourished on the milk of the Word. The simplest principles of the Gospel, Christ the Saviour, the doctrine of forgiveness of sins, the primary truths of Christianity.

But, thirdly, there is the spiritual mind. He calls it later in the passage "the mind of think His thoughts and see with His eyes. He calls it in another part of the passage "the spirit that is of God." "Now we have received the Spirit which is of God that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." To the heart that has received the Holy Ghost a divine truth is made clear and vivid by new spiritual apprehensions. We have not only a divine revelation, but we have a divine illumination. We have not only heavenly light, but we have heavenly sight with which to behold it. We have not only the written Word, but we have the living Word to re-echo it in the secret chambers of our being and to make it to us spirit and life.

Now, the apostle is calling upon these Corinthians to press forward into all the depths

and heights of this divine progression, and to be no longer babes but men in Christ Jesus. It is the same lesson that he afterwards gave to the Hebrew Christians, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto maturity."

A babe is a very beautiful thing in its time and place, but a very ridiculous thing when dressed in an old man's clothes, and rendered preposterous and absurd by an old man's years. It is one thing to be a babe. It is another thing to be a dwarf. The Church is full of dwarfed Christians today, and the result is childish infirmities, childish follies, the disposition to fight, or the disposition to play and the lack of suitable earnestness and power.

○ Now, the wise teacher or preacher will adjust himself to the conditions of his hearers. To one class he will know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. To another he will give the unsearchable riches of Christ. Feeding milk to babes, and presenting spiritual things to spiritual minds.

V. Finally, the doctrine of Christ's Church is not only a supernatural revelation, but it re-

quires a supernatural vision to behold it. We cannot even understand it rightly without the Holy Ghost, therefore the world cannot accept the Gospel without the touch of His illuminating grace. Therefore our wisdom and our genius, and even our most earnest struggling, cannot bring us into the thoughts and things of God. We need to take the open Bible to the open windows of heaven. We need not to have the gift of inspiration to write another Bible, but the gift of illumination to understand the Bible that the Holy Ghost has already given. Often have these great words, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him," been referred to some future experience in the heavenly life. On the contrary, they describe an experience into which we should enter now, for he adds, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." These are the things we ought to need now, and unto which we may enter here by the teaching and the leading of our divine interpreter—the Holy Ghost. He is waiting to lead us into all the fulness of the thoughts

of God and the mind of Christ. One secret is an open ear, the other is an obedient life. He will speak to the soul that loves to listen. He will speak again to the life that hastens to obey. Let us hearken. Let us obey and let us launch out into the deep, and explore the boundless continents of truth, the countless worlds of light, the vast and glorious expanses of heavenly vision which are waiting to open before the souls that dwell on high, for their "eye shall see the King in His beauty and behold the land of far distances."

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

“Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” I. Cor. iv. 1.

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.” I. Cor. iii. 6.

“For we are laborers together with God; ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon.” I. Cor. iii. 9, 10.

“God hath set forth us, the apostles last, as it were appointed unto death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men.” I. Cor. iv. 9.

“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the Gospel.” I. Cor. iv. 15.

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” I. Cor. iii. 13.



THESE various passages convey to us under a great variety of imageries a most complete and vivid picture of the Christian ministry. Speaking of the ministry we do not refer exclusively to the or-

dained ministry or to the technical ecclesiastical office. God makes His ministers, and then the Church recognizes them and sets them apart; but man cannot make a preacher any more than he can make a convert.

The Christian ministry, while it has divinely-appointed varieties and offices, yet is open to every earnest soul who will receive the grace and gifts of the Holy Ghost and use them in humility for the glory of God and the good of man. And as we use these gifts we reach a higher degree of efficiency, and a larger and more divinely equipped ministry.

In what we shall say therefore we include all classes and degrees of Christian workers and witnesses for Christ, with special reference, of course, to those who are more fully set apart as ambassadors of Christ to men. They are described here by six striking figures:

I. Ministers. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ." Literally, the word might be translated the "sub-ministers." There is a touch of humility about it that is beautifully in keeping with the spirit of Paul himself and of his great and lowly Master. The

very name of Paul was adopted because it means "The little," and his humility deepened in the ratio of his spiritual blessing. He wished to take the lowest place in the Christian ministry even as his blessed Master, who girt Himself with the towel of a servant and said to His disciples, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." Once, indeed, He struck a deeper chord when He said: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your slave."

The spirit of pride is bad enough in a private Christian. It is worst of all in a Christian minister. The very apostacy of the early Church came about through the competing claims of the rival bishops, patriarchs and popes, and the sectarianism of today is largely due to the partisanship which exalts men or leads men to exalt themselves to the dishonor of Jesus Christ. The minister who would be honored by his Lord must lie low at His feet, even as the bending form of the autumn grain tells of their rich and laden ears of corn.

II. Stewards of the mystery of God. The efficient steward is the housekeeper. To him

were committed the treasures of his Lord, his wardrobe, his supplies and the management of his domestic affairs and often of his business. He was a trusted chief servant whose business it was to take care of his lord's estate and to dispense his hospitality to his guests and family.

Such a steward was Eliezer, Abraham's servant, who took his master's treasures and went forth to win for his son a bride, and attracted her confidence and love toward his noble master, first showing her and then bestowing upon her the rich treasures which he had brought.

The ministry of Christ is appointed to dispense the richest treasures of God's grace. To us are committed the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Paul tells us what some of these mysteries are. One of them was the glorious secret of Christ's indwelling through the Holy Ghost. This was the mystery that had been hid from ages and generations, and was at last made manifest to the saints, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. This glorious mystery the apostle longed to communicate to all the world, to tell them of the power and of a Presence that could be a substitute for all their

weakness, failure and sorrow, and sustain them amid all emergencies, distresses, temptations and conditions, giving them a charmed life and a talisman of power and victory, no matter what might come.

Another was the mystery of the Church, the body of Christ, the wonderful fellowship, not of cultured society, political alliance or even family and kindred ties, but of a common life in Christ and a common love to one glorious Head, and all the glory to be revealed in that heavenly body and blessed bride. This was one of the glorious mysteries that he loved to proclaim.

Another was the mystery of the kingdom, the coming of the Lord, the plan of the ages, the meaning of the times, the purpose of the dispensation, the secret of the last time, which so many have missed and which is so blessed to understand.

Oh, that the ministry of today might better know and more faithfully impart to the household of faith the mystery of the kingdom and the treasures of the Father's house. Then would we cease to sorrow over the wretched degeneracy of the modern pulpit and a large part

of the modern Church. Then would men lose their taste for the silly sensation, the empty trivialities, the lengthy recreations which bear so often the very name of religion, and invade so frequently the sanctity of the pulpit and the very sanctuary of God.

A day or two ago we had a report in one of the daily papers of the sermon of one of our greatest preachers, a sermon that probably has been circulated among hundreds of thousands of readers, and it was all about this much mis-used text, "Oh, wheel." He began at the spinning wheel, and, after circulating around the wagon wheel, the factory wheel, the locomotive wheel, he wound up with the modern bicycle, and sent his people away extolling the glories of modern civilization and worshipping the wheel and the man that rode it.

What a sad travesty of the Christian ministry! Happier he who, like the wise Master builder, brings out of his treasures things both new and old, and, like the faithful and wise steward, waits on his Master's household and gives them a portion of meat in due season, feeding them on living bread, and knowing and

displaying the treasures on which angels gaze with longing wonder.

III. Patterns and examples. "We are made a spectacle," he says, "unto the world and angels and men. "We stand, as it were, in an arena, and the galleries are filled with invisible beings. The world is looking at us, the angels are looking at us, the devils are watching us, the Lord Jesus Himself is surveying us and expecting us to do our duty. In every thought we think, every action we perform, every battle we lose or win, Christ is honored or dishonored. There is a devilish leer on the devil's face and a shadow upon the face of Jesus when we do ill, but when a shout of victory comes from angel watchers, then the call, "Well done," comes from our loving Lord.

Perhaps this is the greatest work we do—to be gazed at—to be living examples of what we teach and preach. Paul recognized it, and how nobly, patiently and humbly he lived his life! He tells us modestly in this passage, he fought with others not to have the best place, but to be the greatest sufferer and the lowliest and self-sacrificing in the race. This is the silent

testimony that every life is either recording or missing. This is the book that men will read whether they read our tracts or not; and this is the illustration of our teachings and testimonies, which adds ten thousandfold to their force and effectiveness.

IV. Spiritual fathers. So deeply sympathetic, intense and personal was the apostle's ministry that he even imparted, as it were, his own very life to his children in the Lord. "I have begotten you," he says, "in Christ Jesus by the Gospel." I am more than your teacher, I am more than your example, I am more than the servant who waits upon you and the steward who feeds you. I am the very progenitor and medium through whom your life has been derived. True ministry will not stop short of giving its very self, and God will give to us the power through the Holy Ghost to love and win and draw to Jesus the lost to whom He sends us with a soul-begetting power. If the Church is the Bride of the Lamb, her children are the fruit of this divine union, and when our hearts are filled with Christ's great love we will find an outstretching longing and affection for sinful

men which will really communicate to them the very life of God. Then they shall be to us even as our own life, and like Paul we shall bear them upon our hearts, suffering for the temptations, trials and even sins, and nourish and cherish them as we would our very children. The true minister is a real father. Falsely has the name been appropriated by a false ecclesiastical system, but none the less ought it to be true because the caricature and counterfeit has misused it.

V. Husbandmen. The fine figure of the spiritual husbandry supplies many lessons for the true ministers of Christ. Of course, the soil must be prepared. No wise worker will throw the seed upon the barren rocks, but will seek, by watching and by prayer, the breaking up of the sods, the softening of the ground and the opportune season for casting in the precious seed.

Then, of course, the seed is essential. All our plowing and harrowing and watering and culturing will be useless without the living truth. We cannot cozen or coax people into the religion of Jesus. We cannot mesmerize

them into being Christians. There must be the real grain of truth. The wise worker will always give them the Gospel, the clear statement of saving truth through Christ's blood and righteousness and by simple faith in Him.

Then there is watering as well as planting. The seed may not immediately germinate. It may require much prayer and care and many a tear before we shall see it spring.

The true husbandman will not forget the necessity of transplanting. Out in China and Japan it is beautiful to see the rice fields when they are first sown broadcast, and the plants spring up a perfect sea of green on the soft and watered plain. But that will never make a ripe harvest. Each of those plants must be separated and replanted quite a distance apart in regular rows, with room to develop. Then they grow into fruit-bearing rice plants. So our souls must be led on to the next stage, to the deeper life, to the second experience, to the full surrender and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. All Christian work that stops short of this will end in bitter disappointment. The apostle always expected his disciples to receive

the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to be sealed and stamped with the touch of God Himself, and thus armed against failing.

Then every true minister will want his fruit to bear fruit in its turn, to go on unto reproduction and multiply his seed, sown again and again. Our fruit would be like ourselves. If we are soul-winners the souls we lead to Christ will be soul-winners, too. If we are easy and self-complacent they will be the same. It is glorious to propagate our work and multiply it a thousandfold in the lives of others.

Once in a Scottish parish a criticising elder had made the remark to his pastor at the close of a communion service, "Only one addition to the church, and he is only a boy." The elder was disappointed and the pastor was deeply humiliated. That had been the whole result of three months' work, apparently. That Sabbath night he was deeply affected, and pleaded with his people for a revival among them, and asked those who were interested and wished to talk with him to remain. When the meeting closed the congregation went out, including the elder, and when he stepped down from the

platform to take the after-meeting there was only a boy waiting. It was the new member. The pastor prayed and then he talked with this boy. He found that he was a young Scottish lad who desired to be a missionary. This cheered him greatly, and gave him a kind of an outlook of something better. He encouraged him, and after a while the lad went to college and in due time was appointed a missionary to the heathen. Very many years passed, but one day a distinguished and venerable missionary was being talked about all through the land. He was preaching in the most influential pulpits. He was speaking in great assemblies. He was dining at the tables of nobles and princes. He was consulting with the British potentate. He had been instrumental in adding half a continent to the British empire, and opening up South Africa to civilization and the Gospel. It was Robert Moffat, that prince of missionaries. Before that season was over he had hastened to the Scottish parish, and clasped the hand of the minister who had wept one day because of the fact that there was just one new member and he was only a boy. The handful of grain upon the

top of the mountain had grown to be a mighty forest that shook like Lebanon. God make us such spiritual husbandmen and give us such glorious harvests.

VI. Builders. He calls himself a wise master builder. It is no small thing to be a wise builder. The wise builder will look well to the excavation. The first thing is not a stately house, but an ugly hole. Death must come before life, going down before going up. A true worker will not be afraid of thorough work and deep conviction.

Then he will be careful about good foundations, great, solid, eternal truths, and deep and strong convictions. Not so much mere emotion as thorough purpose and will, full set and unreservedly decisive for God and righteousness, and Jesus Christ in His atoning blood, His perfect righteousness and His finished work, the basis of faith and hope. Conversion that is founded on mere emotional excitement will be followed by backslidings as numerous and quick. It is the truth about Christ that saves. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is lying there," as the

words literally mean, "which is Jesus Christ."

It is not, however, the truth about Christ merely—it is the personal Christ, the receiving of Christ, the union of the soul with Christ, which is the real foundation and the living stone.

Again, the wise master builder will look out for his materials. He wants really transformations, souls radically regenerated, lives divinely transformed, not the flesh but the spirit; not the old nature pleased and coaxed into the Church by modern attractions, but hearts that have really felt the touch of God and belong to the spiritual kingdom; not wood, hay and stubble, but gold, silver and precious stones.

Then the wise builder will be sure to see that the building is erected according to the drawings and the pattern shown. Alas, how much Christian work is not according to God's plan! Men are building up a partisan cause trying to please the luxurious and selfish class, trying to fit into the tendencies and conceits of the people, trying to get the world converted, or, as a good many are doing now, believing it

is not so badly wrong anyhow, and just swimming with the tide. God's plan is very clearly laid down—to preach the Gospel as a witness to all the nations, to gather out from the many the Bride of the Lamb, to haste and meet our coming Lord.

But the builder's work will be thoroughly tested. Our church reports and our lists of membership will soon pass away. Only that will remain which can stand the fire of the testing day—"Tried as by fire." There are six kinds of work that shall be tried. Three are good. The gold represents that which is divine and comes from the Holy Ghost. The silver also represents that which is precious, and connected with redemption and the Gospel. Precious stones probably represent the adornments of the Christian character, the beautiful graces of the Christian life, the qualities that will shine in the day when He makes up His jewels. All that we have done to build those materials into the Church of the living God will remain for our joy and eternal recompense.

But, on the other hand, there is the wood,

the best of the perishable materials; useful for much, but only temporary. It represents the transient work of the humanitarian or educational or social improvements which cannot pass into the eternal and spiritual. The hay represents a lower class. Hay is good to feed horses, and may represent that which is indirectly used to help God's agencies, but is not an integral part of these great spiritual forces. There are many who help on God's work without being a part of it and really in it. They are of some use here, and those that count upon them will get something from them; but they will drift away in the ashes of the last great hurricane.

The stubble seems to represent the worn out, exhausted, withered wreckage of things that are dead and worthless. All these things will dissolve in the conflagration of His coming, and woe for him who shall suffer the loss of all his lifework and who is to be saved as by fire. But happy for him who shall not only stand the test himself but shall have the souls that he has loved and led for his joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of Christ at His coming.

Many years ago a bold adventurer entered into a contract to build a lighthouse at the extreme point of England's storm-swept coast. When it was finished he dared the howling tempests to do their worst, and entering the lighthouse on the eve of a frightful storm he cried, "Blow, ye winds; rage, ye waves, and try my work." When the morning dawned eager watchers from the shore looked out in vain for even a vestige of that work. The cruel waves were breaking over the wreck of his life and his labor, and all was lost.

Long afterwards a wise and humbler builder erected the Eddystone lighthouse. Fencing out the waves and digging deep down to the living rock, he anchored his foundations to the bed rock, and slowly and steadily built the dome, where he placed as the motto of his work this mightiest inscription, "Praise to God." Many a storm has tested it, but it has stood them all, the monument of his genius as well as his humility.


God grant that when the last storm shall sweep and the ashes of a dissolving world shall drift upon the hurricane of that tremendous

day, watchers from yonder heavenly heights, as they look out upon the testing of our work, shall say, "Thank God, it stands!"

THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH.

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” I. Cor. iii. 17.

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not of your own? for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” I. Cor. vi. 19, 20.

ORINTH, we have already seen, was the center at once of the world’s culture and moral and social corruption. The very name Corinth became the synonym of social dishonor. It was inevitable, therefore, that the Church of Christ should be in danger of contamination from the prevailing influences, and it is not surprising to find that, at a very early stage, gross and grievous instances of unholy practices reached the apostle’s ear; among others a common report of incestuous marriages among the members of the church, and, what was much more serious, the toleration of this abuse by the pub-

lic sentiment of the church itself. Therefore he proceeds in the early chapters of this epistle to deal with this question in no compromising way.

First, he reasserts in most emphatic language the absolute necessity of personal holiness on the part of all disciples of Christ, and the high standard of discipline in the fellowship of believers as a whole. He makes special provision for the extreme case which had risen among them, and gives explicit directions that the offending members shall be solemnly and publicly excommunicated from the Church of Christ, and handed over in the name of the Lord Jesus to the judgment of God, through Satanic power, even to the extent of the death of the offender, if necessary, in order that he may be brought to repentance even at the last moment, and his spirit saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Church discipline is here recognized as a very solemn thing, and something which is sure to bring, if properly exercised with due regard to the authority and will of God, the interposing hand of God Himself, and the judg-

ment from which no excuse or evasion can protect the false and daring offender.

How salutary it would be if this simple apostolic precedent should be more commonly followed, and more divinely efficient than it is in the lax religions of this compromising age.

Still further in the same chapter this apostle directs that they are to withdraw their fellowship at the Lord's table and in the communion of the saints from every brother who is licentious, covetous, idolatrous, a railer, a drunkard, or an extortioner. It is not possible to separate ourselves from business correspondence or worldly association with ungodly men, but in the fellowship of the Church of Christ the atmosphere of His sacred sanctuary must be kept unsullied and heavenly. (I. Cor. v. 1-6 and 11, 12.)

Having thus provided for the public discipline of obdurate and inconsistent members of the Church, Paul proceeds to emphasize the necessity of personal holiness on the part of individual members by a series of vivid illustrations and impressive appeals.

I. He shows the importance of holiness on

the part of the people of God by a forcible illustration, the Feast of the Passover, and its typical significance (chapter v. verses 6 to 8), "Know ye not," he asks, "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The Paschal feast was the first of the annual ceremonial rites of the Jews, and was especially suggestive of the fellowship of Christ's redeemed people in all future ages. One of the most marked features of that great rite was the inexorable exclusion of all leaven from the feast and the household. Prior to the celebration of the Passover it was customary for the father, with lighted candle, to pass through the house, inspecting every chamber, even looking under every bed, chair, sofa and article of furniture, and then solemnly declaring that there was no leaven in any portion of the

house or member of the household. Leaven has, therefore, always stood in the Word of God as the symbol of corruption. In our Lord's great parable in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, it represents the introduction of impurity into the Church of Christ, until the whole house became saturated with the unholy elements of fleshly corruption.

One of the very first questions of the apostle in his great treatise on salvation is, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" and his unqualified answer is, "God forbid." Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," is the very first inscription we read stamped upon the cornerstone of the Church of Jesus Christ. He can save the sinner, but the sin must be utterly renounced and laid over upon the Lord Jesus Christ for crucifixion and eternal separation. Purge out the old leaven, the flesh, the carnal life; the whole of the old creation, and reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. We are to be a new lump and God recognizes us as unleavened.

Then we are to carefully watch against the introduction of the new leaven, the leaven of malice and wickedness, every form of evil and sin, and to present to God the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, truth representing God's revealed truth without alloy, and sincerity representing our honest, upright heart holding the truth in righteousness, and obeying it in singleness of purpose.

II. His next illustration and incentive to holiness is drawn from the ancient sanctuary and temple of God. "Ye are the temple of God," he says, holy, sacred, and therefore we must keep it pure, for "if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." With the utmost sacredness God has always guarded the holy sanctuary of His manifested Presence. When He came down on Sinai, the mountain was fenced and isolated from any unhallowed touch. Into His ancient shrine no man could pass till he had offered his sacrifice on the altar, and washed his hands and robes in the laver of cleansing. Into the innermost sanctuary of His presence but one could pass, and he only once a year, with spotless garments and

sprinkled blood. When Uzzah presumed with reckless hands to touch the sacred symbol of God's sanctuary he was smitten with instant death. When the rash Uzziah tried to offer sacrifices unauthorized, he felt the instant touch of leprosy upon his brow, and hastened out to hide himself from the awful token of his judgment and his shame.

Not less sacred is the presence of the Holy One even amid the larger mercy of the New Testament age. Well may the apostle ask if "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

In the mind of God, and in the judgment of the Holy Scriptures, the heart of the believer is a more sacred shrine than the ark or the sanctuary of old. God would have us look upon ourselves as His temples with the same sacredness, and guard our inmost thought and being from the profaning touch or the faintest

shadow of evil, either in imagination, or word, or deed. We should walk softly through the world as though we were sons of Levi bearing the ark of God, and having enthroned within us His majestic Presence, before whom angels veil their faces with their wings, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy." This divine self-respect, this holy consciousness of God, will lift us above the approach of temptation and toleration of sin.

III. He next appeals to their past experience and their escape from evil through their conversion and consecration to God. "Such," he says, "were some of you, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (chapter vi. verse 11). "Is it not enough that you have once escaped this slough of sin? Can you bear to think of again being involved in the slime? Is not the very memory hideous enough to fill your soul with horror? Can you ever look upon it again with toleration or indulgence?"

And yet, alas, how many, even after their salvation as brands from the burning, and

their sanctification from the power of corruption, have allowed themselves, like Lot's wife, to look back to Sodom until they have gradually become accustomed to the vision of sin, and the picture has insensibly lost its terrors and the old sin begins to reassert its power, and ere long it is true of them, as the apostle expresses it so sadly, they have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins, and, it is still more sadly true, they return like the dog to his nauseating feast, and the swine to her wallowing in the mire, and their last state is worse than the first.

IV. He next appeals to them by their union with the Lord Jesus Christ as members of His body, and bound by every tie of love and loyalty, to be separated unto Him, and true to the sacred bond of that heavenly marriage with which He has honored His Bride.

The apostle uses very strong figurative language in this passage, and describes our union with Christ under the image of the perfect oneness of the marriage bond. "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ," and the body is not for fornication, but for the

Lord, and the Lord for the body." He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. It is not only in the public and collective capacity of the Church that we are thus wedded to our heavenly Bridegroom, but individually we are here thus represented as personally united to Him, and our very body is in some sense specially constituted to be the recipient of His life, while His body is constituted also to be the Head and fountain of our life physically as well as spiritually.

This holy mystery the divine Spirit alone can teach. It is hardly necessary to say that it must be guarded from every possible touch of materialism and coarseness. It is as unutterably pure as the heaven of heavens, and high above the faintest suggestion of earthly passion or sentimental love, but it is none the less vital, real and unspeakably sacred. This should keep us pure even as the wife is kept pure, not by the restraints of law, not by confinement or force, but by the choice of an exclusive affection, that by its very nature shuts out others from her heart, and makes her the property of one alone. By this holy sanction

He bids us keep our purity unspotted for the day of His glorious coming and the consummation of our perfect union. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider," He says to His Bride; "forget thy kindred and thy father's house, so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." By and by the message will follow, "She shall be brought into the King's palace with gladness and rejoicing."

V. Our redemption and divine ownership are urged as the ground of a watchful and wholehearted sanctity and consecration. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His." Not only are we united to our Lord by this intimate and exquisite bond, but we are owned by Him by virtue of His redeeming purchase and precious blood. He has bought us, and we have no right to let another control us, or even hold ourselves for ourselves apart from Him.

In the old slave times there were two mulatto slaves who had grown up on the same plantation, the one a beautiful quadroon girl, and

the other a young man of bright and handsome person. Both had become fondly attached through their frequent association. This young fellow had labored long and hard with the double object of purchasing, at once, her liberty and his, and then making her his wife. But hard times came upon the old master, and he was obliged to sell his slaves, and the occasion was announced, and on that terrible block stood this beautiful trembling girl. In the foreground was a coarse, brutal planter from the Mississippi, who had determined to buy her for the basest of reasons. In the background stood the young malatto watching the sale, because he had determined to buy her, if he could, and set her free. Up went the figures while his heart beat fast as they rose very near his limited sum of a thousand dollars, and then, at last, with a great gulp in his throat, he made a bid of a thousand dollars, while everybody wondered. The planter looked at him with a leer for a moment, and then he bid fifty dollars more. The poor malatto sank back. The hammer fell, and the girl was sold to her brutal owner. With heart

nearly broken the young man hastened to his master, and asked him if he would take a thousand and let him buy himself. The kind master consented and the young slave was free. Then he went to this Mississippi planter and asked him to look at him and examine him. Said he, "Would you be willing to exchange me for the girl you bought yesterday? I am free, but will sell myself to you as a slave if you will set her free and take me as her substitute." There was a brief conflict between the base passions of this selfish man, but finally greed prevailed. He knew the man was worth much more than the woman and he consented, hoping, doubtless, to be able after a little to get them both. Papers were made out, and the joyful slave went to tell his loved one that she was free by the cost of his own liberty and life, and then he added, with touching simplicity, "Be good, for my sake, and always remember that you belong to me." And so they parted, but the vessel in which he sailed was burned and he lost his life. Then this brutal man came back and tried to force her to give herself up, as he had lost her substitute. But she

held firmly to her rights and papers of liberty, and the law sustained her. Then he tried to cajole her and bribe her, but her noble and simple answer always was, as temptations came again and again, "He bought me, I belong to him." Oh, that this divine incentive might bind our hearts to Him, and make it the watchword against temptation and the pledge of sacrifice and service, "I belong to Him!"


VI. Finally, the sacredness of the body is the last incentive to which the apostle appeals for our purity of life. This material form is as sacred and as holy as the spirit which dwells within it. God has honored it by giving it in some sense a likeness to Himself, and making it the incarnation of His own blessed and glorious Son. Some day it will sit upon the throne of the universe, and be the most glorious object in the eternal ages. Oh, let us keep it pure. Let us consecrate it to its highest possible employ, and let Him fill it now with His holiness, His health and all the enduements and possibilities of His Holy Spirit, and fit it for the highest usefulness below and the noblest destiny above.

The old version has wrongly read this passage. It exclusively applies to the body. The true reading is, "Glorify God in your body which is God's." So let us present our bodies a living sacrifice, a reasonable service, holy and acceptable unto God.

THE CHURCH AND THE CHRISTIAN IN RELATION TO THE WORLD.

“Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.” I. Cor. vii. 24.

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they weep not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoice not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not, and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness.” I. Cor. vii. 29-32.

HE relation of the Church of Christ and the individual Christian to the secular and social world is a subject of deep practical importance, and the apostle has discussed it with great fulness of detail in this important epistle. We shall take up at this time the relation of the Christian to secular business, to the home and to society.

I. The Christian in relation to business.

Our secular callings are part of God's divine

order and province for each of our lives. There is nothing necessarily wrong in secular business, and there is nothing essentially more holy in withdrawing from the occupations of life and giving one's self exclusively to what might be called the work of the ministry. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself lent His sanction both to business and the home, by spending the first thirty years of His life in a carpenter's shop at Nazareth, and performing His first miracle at a wedding. Yet, Christians are very apt to get the idea that they can serve God better by withdrawing from business and from worldly occupations and giving their time exclusively to Christian work. This is by no means the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. God needs His best men in the place where men most congregate, and the most useful ministries of life may be proclaimed in the kitchen, the factory, and the counting-room where we come in contact with men who will not come to listen to our preaching, but who cannot help seeing the lives we live and reading the epistles which are written in the living characters of daily duty and faithfulness. It is much harder

to find a thoroughly consecrated business man than a score of preachers. If God has cast our lot, therefore, in the sphere of secular life, let us abide in the calling wherein we are called, with God, and adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things.

But let us be sure that we abide therein with God. Let our business be wholly consecrated to Him. Let Him be the Senior Partner in every firm and the Proprietor in every interest. Then shall our business speak for Christ with practical and mighty emphasis; then shall we be able to count upon the counsel and help of a Friend whose constant love and ceaseless providences will bind us to Him by a thousand cords of grateful remembrance.

In the previous chapter the apostle takes up an extremely practical question in connection with the secular business, and severely censures the Corinthian Christians for going to law with their brethren in the civil courts of unbelievers. This he regards as a shameful abuse, and one that greatly dishonors Christ in the presence of His enemies. He very plainly intimates that while God's children may resort

to the powers that are ordained of God under certain circumstances for their protection against the world, it is very different with respect to their own brethren, and that some other means of settling differences and disputes among the children of God should be resorted to than the decisions of the ungodly, and the tribunals where wicked men strive for unjust advantage and ignore the name of Christ and the authority of the divine Law Giver.

Beloved Christian brother, are there not some who read these lines who stand reprovèd before the tribunal of conscience and God's Word for unscriptural methods of business? Yea, he adds, not only does brother go to law with brother, but brother defrauds brother, and provokes to ungodly litigation by injustice, dishonesty and wrong. May God help us so to live that our very business shall become not merely an avenue of selfish gain, but a pulpit of far-reaching influence and a testimony of righteousness and godliness before an unbelieving world.

II. The Christian in relation to the home.

He next takes up the subject of marriage

and family life in the same practical way, and his teachings strike home with searching reproof to the compromising lives of many of God's children in these degenerate days.

1. First of all he recognizes marriage as a divine institution for human society, and in every way honorable and right if properly consummated. There is no special sanctity attached to the unmarried state, and there is no reflection of a lower degree of holiness as in any way connected with Christian marriage. The Holy Scriptures give no countenance whatever to the monkish notion that married life is in itself gross or unholy. The Bible's first picture of humanity is a happy, hallowed home, and Christ's first manifestation of His love and power for sinful men was made at Cana, and the closing vision of the book of Revelation opens upon a marriage scene and a glorified Bride sitting by the side of her ascended and regnant Lord and King.

2. But marriage must meet God's conditions if it is to have His approval, and the very first condition is that it shall be only "in the Lord." The Scriptures utterly discountenance the mar-

riage of a Christian woman to an ungodly man, or the opposite, and no faithful minister of the Gospel ought ever to celebrate such a ceremony and have a part in such a sacrilege.

You may excuse your disobedience under many a pretext; you may talk with plausible earnestness of your purpose to influence and save the erring one, but you will find that one drop of ink will go farther than a whole fountain of crystal water, and that God will not lend Himself to your well-meaning attempts which have been in daring defiance of His own wise and loving prohibition. Obedience is much better than sacrifice, and the far too costly sacrifice in this case often means a life of misery, a lost crown, and perhaps a heritage of woe bequeathed to innocent children who should never have been born.

3. Assuming, however, that marriage is disjointed and that this inequality is found to exist perhaps through the fact that both were unconverted at the time of marriage, or many other possible causes, what is the teaching of the Scriptures in regard to such a marriage already consummated? Are we justified in

breaking it because the parties are not united in their faith? Certainly not. You cannot put away your wife because you have been lifted up to a consecrated life and she is still a stranger to it; you cannot justly neglect your home and leave your family unprovided for while you go to do missionary work. You are bound by every obligation of piety to stand by your unsaved partner. God will make the offspring even of this union hallowed, and for the sake of the Christian member of the household will give the special privileges of His grace to those who are unsaved so far as they are willing to receive them; for "the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband," that is, is made hallowed by the marriage relation, "else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," that is, in the ceremonial and legal sense.

But while this is fully recognized, yet there is a gentle provision in the New Testament allowed for the class of cases which may arise where the unbelieving one is not willing to remain with the believing partner, and the husband or wife discards their Christian

companion. What are we to do in this case? Very clearly the apostle says, with delicate wisdom, a brother or sister is not in bondage in such a case. "If the unbelieving depart, let him depart." An amicable separation in such cases is entirely Scriptural, and often best for the harmony of the household and the true interests of both parties; but this is not a divorce and this does not justify either party in remarrying. One would think they had enough of it already, and that the dictates of experience as well as delicacy would be sufficient to prevent the outrageous abuse of the marriage law which is demoralizing our modern society.

It seems wise and necessary to state with great clearness the Bible law respecting divorce for the protection of innocent lives that are constantly in danger of making grave mistakes through the lax one of public opinion on this subject. It is the judgment of the great body of evangelical churches in Christian lands, and it is fully borne out by the sound and strong teachings of the Holy Scriptures, that there is but one course that can justify divorce, and

that is actual unfaithfulness to the marriage bond by one of the parties. Where that has occurred, the innocent party has the right to divorce the guilty one and having so done has always the right to remarry; but the divorced person has not the right to remarry. Cases are constantly seeking the counsel of Christian ministers where some innocent and thoughtless woman has been drawn into an engagement of marriage with a divorced man. It may be he has allowed himself to be divorced simply by default because he was quite willing to let an uncongenial partner break the bond by legal proceedings, but by so doing he has involved his good name under a serious cloud, and he has no right to involve any innocent woman with him in the compromise. Such marriages might be recognized in all sections of the country, but according to the accepted standard of ecclesiastical law and according to the public opinion of most Christian lands it would be entirely discredited, and it certainly is not in harmony with the lofty standards of the Holy Scriptures.

4. But the apostle rises to higher ground.

While marriage is constituted as Scriptural and honorable, and while, when once formed, it is to be guarded from reckless attempts at dissolution and invested with every holy sanction and safeguard, yet there are many instances when even marriage is most undesirable, and when life's highest usefulness may be far better secured by a single life and free from the embarrassments and complications of domestic bonds. The old-fashioned notion that matrimony is the natural destiny of every woman is an insult to the capacity and independence of a true woman. God has made her by His grace and assistance abundantly equal to all the necessities of life and the highest possibilities of existence, and there are innumerable cases in which it is just as true as ever, "He that giveth her in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." There are many forms of Christian service where we would be turned aside from the highest efficiency and the freedom necessary for entire obedience to the call of God, by becoming entangled with the restraints of another life and obliged to regulate our duty by

the circumstances and preferences of another. Where God has called you forth to be His messenger in some difficult field and some high and holy enterprise for Him, be very sure that you do not let the preference of selfish affection hinder your liberty or disqualify you from the most efficient service. Be very sure that you do not merely restrict your own liberty, but involve another life in the perils and privations for which that life may be unequal, and thus two lives may be crippled or limited in their usefulness by an affection as shortsighted and selfish as it was sincere.

Those of us that are called to engage in public service and deal with lives that are consecrated to missionary work are constantly coming in contact with most excellent young people who, after having received from God the distinct call to high and holy service, usually in the mission field, have become engaged without a due regard to God's claim upon their lives, and we know some lives which today are blighted and disappointed in consequence of a fatal error in this direction. They have lost their high calling to the field of honor, and,

alas, it usually happens that the union for the sake of which they made the sacrifice has turned out to be a bitter disappointment and sometimes a final separation.

Let us be careful how we steal from the altar of heaven the sacrifice which we have placed there; in taking it to our nest, a coal of fire may cling to it which will set aflame our home, and leave our life a heap of smouldering ruins.

5. One other point is worthy of important emphasis, and that is that those who are married, and married in the Lord, be very careful that they do not make their happiness and affection a selfish end, or a restraint upon the freedom of the other in the Master's work. It is in this connection the apostle says, with much practical solemnity, "Ye are bought with a price; be ye not the servants of men." Many a woman has brought upon herself spiritual leanness and even bitter sorrow by trying to hold her husband for her own gratification, and encompassing his Christian work with so many strains, entanglements and jealousies as to prove a hindrance instead of a helpmate, and

a stumbling block in both their paths. And many a man has made a tremendous mistake in thinking his wife existed for his own pleasure, and that he had the right to control her conscience, her religious freedom, her time and her life, and absorb her as part of his own gross and earthly life.

That which we thus cling to, we are sure to lose, and what we trustfully and lovingly give to God we shall doubly gain in the end. Marriage should not be a weight and restraint upon either life, but a blessed addition of strength and an impulse toward high and heavenly things.

Dr. Arnot has compared these unhappy unions to two ships at sea chained together about twenty feet apart, and dashing into each other's sides with every rolling wave, until they rasp and tear each other to pieces and go down to the bottom together. If they were close enough to be one they would sail the billows together, or if they were miles apart they would surmount the waves alone; but they are just near enough and far enough to be a mutual curse and a source of destruction. God

help us to hold our friends, affections and our social ties as sacred trusts for Him, and as avenues of unselfish blessing to and through each other.

III. The Christian in relation to society.

The apostle speaks in the same series of paragraphs about the attitude of Christians to the social gatherings of life with special reference to the heathen feasts and social entertainments. He lays down a number of principles in connection with this subject which have still a very practicable application to our present day life. It is true we are not concerned with the question of meat sacrificed to idols, but we are concerned with the principle on which that particular matter was to be regulated and that applies to all questions of our social life.

One of these principles is, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things edify not." That will settle a great many questions. Is it for the good of others? Is it for the glory of God? Is it the most practical use of my time, that I should engage in this thing?

The next principle is, "All things are lawful,

but I will not be brought under the power of any." This applies to a great many indulgences which easily become engrossing; any amusement, yea, any legitimate occupation that absorbs us too much and becomes necessary to our happiness, is dangerous. Any social friendship, which possesses us and takes away our perfect liberty of conscience and will, is wrong, especially if you find yourself under another's undue influence and power. There is a social hypnotism which has perverted many a true life, and to which you have no right ever to expose your freedom in the Lord.

Another principle and one of far-reaching application is, "Take heed lest by any means your liberty become a stumbling block to them that are weak." "If meat make my brother to offend I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." This principle ought to settle most of the question relating to our indulgences in things which we believe to be for us harmless and lawful.

Take, for example, the question of the use of stimulants. We are frank to say that we believe alcohol, like leaven, to be forbidden in

the Scriptures as a beverage because it involves the principle of fermentation, but we know many excellent men and women who do not believe this. Many Biblical expositors contend that the Scriptures do not condemn fermented wine in itself. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that this may be so; still the greater question arises, what is the effect of this indulgence on innumerable lives, and what may the effect of our example be upon others? There can be but one answer to this question, and on the ground of love the sensitive conscience will be prohibited from the use of that which may become a stumbling block to a brother.

The same principle may be applied to the horse-race, the theater and the dance. We know of most painful instances where young men that have been saved from the world have been led back to the horse-race and the intoxicating cup by the example of their Sunday school teacher or some Christian friend.

A man who loved horses with what he believed to be an innocent affection and a good conscience, and who had no sympathy with

the abuses of the ring, was the occasion of the ruin of some of the noblest members of his own Bible class who would never have thought of going had they not seen him on his way.

This also includes the Sunday newspaper, the doubtful novel, the society ball, the cigar and pipe of the smoker, and the whole range of doubtful things which may be decided without any difficulty or doubt, by the higher law of what is the best for others, for the glory of God, and what is the most Christian thing for me to do.


Finally, there is one great principle eloquently and impressively brought out in the close of his discussion of these questions which should lift the whole subject to a higher plane, and that is, that all earthly things are but mere passing stage scenes in the drama of human life, and that none of them are important enough in themselves to become the objects of our attention. They are only the drapery of the stage or the scenes of the passing hour, and life must take hold of something far beyond them.

stage some of them are laughing, but their laughter is not real; some of them are crying, but their tears are not sincere; some of them are being wedded, but the marriage is not real; some of them are buying great estates, but nothing is owned; some of them are posing as kings, but they will be uncrowned in an hour. It is an unreal world, and so he says the stage scenes of this world pass away, and nothing temporal is worthy of being directly the object of our life; it is merely a means to something better and more enduring. And so, the tears of life are not to be made too important; the smiles of joy are not to fascinate us too long; the joys of home are but the entertainment of a night at a wayside inn; the business of life is but a stepping-stone to a higher gain. All these things are transitory and purely incidental. We are to live beyond them. We are to use the world as not abusing it, and our life below is to be lived under the powers of the world to come.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY; ITS AUTHORITY AND SUPPORT.

“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. But I have used none of these things; neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me; for it were better for me to die; than that any man should make my gloryfying void.

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest by that means, when I have preached to others, preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” I. Cor. ix. 14, 15 and 27.

 HIS chapter expounds the principles underlying the authority and support of the Gospel ministry, and also its true spirit and aim. It is a good thing for the pew sometimes to hear the pulpit preach to itself, and it is a very good thing for the pulpit to preach to itself, and to be thoroughly imbued with the apostolic spirit so finely exemplified in St. Paul.

I. The authority of the ministry. “Am I not an apostle?” he asks. “Are not ye my work in the Lord? The seal of mine apostleship are

ye in the Lord. A dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me. Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel" (verses 1, 2, 16 and 17). This is surely a sufficient basis for the authority and obligation of the Christian ministry.

First, he tells us that a dispensation of the Gospel has been committed unto him. This word "dispensation" means stewardship or trusteeship. He has been appointed a steward of the treasures of his Lord and of the supplies of his Lord's household. Such a dispensation is committed to every true minister, and it is a very solemn thing to be invested with an office so responsible and standing under an accountability so tremendous.

Next, he tells us not only has this trust been committed to him, but he has accepted it with such a profound sense of obligation that it has become an imperative necessity to his conscience and his life. It has put the woe on him, and the go in him, that he must preach. This is the true secret of successful service, not to take a text, but to have the text take us, and to be so baptized with our message that we can honestly

say, like the apostles after Pentecost, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." It is this "cannot but" that tells. It is the bursting fountain coming from the depths and drenching the heights. Like the old astronomer who was forced for a time by the thumb screws to recant his heresy of the earth going round the sun, but the moment the pressure was removed, almost unconsciously to himself, the honest expression burst from his lips, "It moves all the same."

Further, he can point to the seals of his apostleship and his work in the Lord. He has more than a prefix to his name; he has a lot of glorious suffixes—the souls that have been added to him and into whose faces he can look and say, "In Christ have I begotten you through the Gospel." Every true servant of Christ ought to be successful, and to be able to point to the actual fruits of a faithful ministry. The Bible has no sympathy with the idea that it is all right to go on for a quarter of a century doing our best and seeing no results. The anomaly of a thousand churches in one of our great denominations that have not had a single

addition during the past year by profession of faith, has no recognition in the New Testament. Such churches do not deserve to die, for they are dead already.

Only today a gentleman told us of the conversion of a colored girl who served in his kitchen, through a few loving acts of personal kindness in helping her to pump the water and to get through her hard places. She told him with innocent frankness she had never been used that way before, and it quite broke her down, and in the first test that came to her she yielded her heart to God. Your workshop, your store, your office, can each become a sacred pulpit and a birthplace of souls if you have the "cannot but" running over from your own heart.

II. The rights of the ministry.

First, the minister has a right to the necessities and comforts of life. "Have we not power to eat and to drink?" (v. 4). The word *power* means "right," here. The minister of Christ has a right to have a living. Some good people scarcely concede this. It is said that once a committee waited upon Lyman Beecher to ask

him to secure for them a pastor for their church in one of the New England towns. They wanted a man of great ability, good in the pulpit and good out of it, with attractive gifts and deep piety. The doctor asked them about how much they expected to give this extraordinary minister. They said if he was all right they could probably raise three hundred dollars a year for him. The keen-witted doctor suppressed a rippling smile, and coolly suggested to the brethren that the only man he could think of that met their standard fully was the late Dr. Dwight, and he would suggest that they send a message to the angel Gabriel to send him back to take charge of this church, and, especially as he had been in heaven so long and had obtained a spiritual body, he would probably be able to live on three hundred dollars a year. The time was when this sarcasm was more deserved than it is today, but there are not wanting many sections of the country where the faithful ministry is still starved.

Next, he claims the right to home life and to his ties of affection. "Have not we the right to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other

apostles?" The ministry is not improved by celibacy. It needs the gentle touch of human kindness, loving sympathy, and to be able to speak from every avenue of human life to every variety of human experience.

Again, he claims the right of support. "I and Barnabas, have not we a right to forbear working?" He claims for himself and his brother the right of their appropriate support. There is no reason why he should be compelled to toil with his own hands for the livelihood of himself and his brother. And yet the fact was that he went through his ministry not merely living a life of trust, but living a life of toil. His entrance to a Roman town found him among the day-laborers at the loom earning his wages like a common workman, and at the end of the week paying his board and supplying the wants of his brother from his hard-earned wages. But this he had no right to do.

He then proceeds to establish the right of the ministry to a proper support from a most cogent and conclusive argument.

First, he says even nature ought to teach us this. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his

own charges? who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or, who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" (v. 7). Even under the ancient law the ox that trampled out the corn must not be muzzled. "Doth God take care for oxen, or saith He it for our sakes?"

Next, he shows that under the old dispensation God made ample provision for the support of His ministers. "The priests that minister at the altar live of the altar." One whole tithe of the income of the Hebrew people went to the support of the Levites, and surely God is not estimating at a lower value the lives of His servants in the larger blessing of the New Testament dispensation.

But, further, he tells us that this is an ordinance of the New Testament distinctly appointed and commanded. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." It as much a divine ordinance as any of the sacred appointments of the Holy Scriptures. It is well that God's people should fully understand this, and it is well that some of us are able to stand in a

position of such freedom in this matter that we can speak frankly to our brethren without being misunderstood or supposed to be seeking our own advantage. The church or the Christian that does not definitely and systematically contribute, not merely for general missionary objects, but for the support of those who minister to them in the Lord, will lose spiritually. This rests upon the law of equity, and there is no answer to his invincible argument, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing that we should reap your carnal things?"

III. His own voluntary sacrifice of his rights. Now he rises to higher ground. Having claimed the right both for himself and his brother, he voluntarily renounces it on his own behalf, and takes the place of surrender, of sacrifice, of manual toil and of all the hardships incident to the great renunciation he has so gladly made. He does this with great deliberation. He is not by any means deceived about it. He has the glorious future in view, and the compensation which he feels will well repay him for all all the sacrifices involved. And it is this—he has no glory and no reward for preach-

ing the Gospel. That is simply a matter of duty and the honest discharge of a sacred trust. The only way, therefore, that he can add the element of recompense and bring into his ministry a higher quality of heroism and love is by the spirit of sacrifice. And so he adds, "If I do this thing willingly I have a reward, but I have used none of these things, neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. What is my reward, then? Verily, that when I preach the Gospel I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge" (verses 15-18).

The teaching of the apostle in this matter is exceedingly clear and most important to understand. No man has a right to leave the ministry of Christ without support; but if a minister of Christ chooses himself to stand in a place of personal independence, to trust the Lord alone for his needs, or to toil with honest hands for his own support, he has the right and he should be accredited the consideration which Paul asked for himself, and in some respects he will have a freedom and a claim to disinterested

service which may give his testimony a greater effectiveness for God and the cause of truth.

IV. The principle of accommodation to the prejudices and infirmities of others in order to do them greater good. This is a fine touch of Christian love. "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

Now, let us carefully observe that while Paul yields much to the prejudices, weaknesses and sensibilities of those whom he seeks to win, yet he never compromises principle; he never stoops to their level. He says, "To them that are without law, as without law," but he adds immediately, "Not without law myself to God, but

under the law to Christ." What he means is simply this—that he does not contend for petty theories, forms of speech, phases of doctrine, non-essential questions, but he does not once surrender his purity. He will meet the man of the world on his own ground, but he will not do what the man of the world does. Standing on a higher plane and reaching to him he will lift him by his love and strength. This does not mean we are to marry ungodly people to save them; that we are to go to the theatre in order to influence our husbands who go; that we are to play cards in order to get to the hearts of some of the players; that we are to get people in love with us that we may lead them to Christ; but it means that we are to approach men with the love of the Gospel. We are not to come to them with our crotchets and our technicalities and our sharp angles; but we are to recognize in them what is good, and touch everything that can be made a point of contact with Christianity, and in the right sense be all things to them that we may gain them for Christ and their own selves.

V. His high and glorious ambition to win the


prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Every noble life must have an uplift, an attraction, an inspiration, a hope, a vision, a goal of attraction and expectation. Paul had a glowing heart alive with divine enthusiasm. He had caught the light of the Eternal Hills. He had seen afar the Vision of the Coming Glory. He had anticipated the rapture of that hour when he should receive a crown from the glorified Lord, and for this all else was counted loss, and "forgetting the things that are behind," sacrificing the things that were secondary, he "pressed toward the mark for the prize" to which God had called him from on high. So he speaks to us, in the closing paragraph of this chapter, of the incorruptible crown which he himself set out to win. He reminds us that it is but for a few. "All run, but one receiveth the prize," and he is deeply sensible that this prize may be lost. Very solemnly does he speak of the possibility of his preaching the Gospel to others and yet being "a castaway;" not lost, for Paul never contemplated such a prospect or doubted his final salvation, but rejected in the day of award and recompense. The word liter-

ally means "disapproved." Therefore he pressed forward and trampled under foot everything that could hinder his holy ambition. "I keep under my body," he says, "and bring it into subjection." The Greek word is, "I buffet my body." It is the training of the athlete for the arena. It is the self-denial and abstinence from soft indulgences, and everything that could soften or emasculate the strength of manhood. This is what he means.

Beloved, we may have the easy place, if we will. We may take the rose-strewn path, if we want to. We may evade the cross. We may shun the trying ordeal. We may be popular and have things pleasant for a little while. Or we may endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and keep under our body for the incorruptible crown. Some day we shall not regret a single tear or sacrifice when the heart's blood shall have congealed into rubies, and the teardrops shall have become crystal jewels in an unfading crown. Oh, then we shall be so glad that we were not afraid to sacrifice or suffer for His sake, and be partakers of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall be revealed!

LIVING IN THE END OF THE AGE.

“Now all these things happened unto them for types and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the age have come.” I. Cor. x. 11.

 HIS chapter describes the relation of the Church of the New Testament to the saints of the Old. It places us in the ends of the age, standing the heirs of the past, the sentinels of the solemn future, at the very gates of the coming kingdom, and it points out the peculiar responsibilities and privileges which devolve upon us in view of these things as the men and women upon whom “the ends of the age are come.”

I. The types and examples of the past. Four great types are held forth here, drawn from the history of ancient Israel and embodying the great truths of redemption, and we are shown how really identical the Gospel preached

to the ancient fathers was with that which is today the ground of our salvation. "For they did all eat the same spiritual meat, and they did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

1. The first great type held forth is the Cloud, which led them through the wilderness and covered them as a pavilion from their enemies. It is here spoken of as a divine baptism which came upon them as they passed through the sea. The account of that cloud is very striking and beautiful. First, it preceded and guided them as they went forth out of the land of bondage. So the Holy Spirit leads us out of the world and sin into Christ, going before us at first, while we follow somewhat at a distance. But when at last they came to the deep, dark flood and went down into the death of which it was a symbol, then that cloud that had gone before them gently turned backward, and passing through the camp baptized them into its very substance, covered them over as a pavilion, wrapped itself around them as a garment, penetrated

their very being as the element of their living and breathing, and then passed behind and stood above them as a wall of majestic protection from their enemies and a glorious light to shine upon their pathway as they marched on before.

So, after we have followed the Holy Spirit in His earlier leadings, and have come to the place of surrender and death to self and sin, then He comes nearer, passes through our very being, baptizes us into Himself and then passes through all our life and becomes our rereward, gathering up our past, protecting us as a mighty Providence from all evil, and guarding and guiding all our future way. Beautiful, majestic symbol of the presence of God with His people and the baptism of the Holy Ghost!

2. The next type was the Sea. "They were all baptized unto Moses in the sea." There is no doubt that primarily the sea represented our baptism by water. We know the Red Sea represented the idea of their death to the old life of Egypt, and we know that baptism is the symbol of death, for "as many of us as were

baptized into Christ were baptized into His death.”

But it represents much more than the ceremony of baptism. It is a vivid figure of that real death to self and sin in which all true life must begin. This is the first goal to which the Holy Ghost is ever leading us—the grave. It was of this the Master said, “I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened until it be accomplished,” and every true servant must follow Him by the same steps, by the same death. Is it not our deepest need? Is it not the secret of all our failures, all our sorrows, all our defeats? Is it not our deepest desire that we may be dead indeed unto self and sin? Oh, let us go forth with Him to the cross. Let us follow the pillar of cloud and fire down into the very bottom of the sea, and when we reach its depths and all seems lost, then the heavenly cloud will meet us and will enfold us in the bosom of God and baptize us into all His glorious fulness.

3. The third symbol is Manna, the heavenly bread provided for the people in the wilderness. This was the type of Christ as the sus-

tenance of our spiritual life. The most remarkable thing about this bread was that it was supernatural food. There was no support to be found for them in the natural world, nor is there any supply for the needs of the new man to be found in any earthly thing. It may try to feed on human love, or human sympathy, or human success, but it will wither and die. It must have Jesus Christ to nourish it, and live on His very life. Spirit, soul and body must draw their subsistence from the very mouth of God. "I am the true bread which came down from heaven and which a man may eat and not die." "As the living Father hath sent Me, and as I live by the living Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

It was daily bread. It was not an accumulation stored up for a year, but every morning it must be received fresh, and so as we enter upon the year before us the watchword must be, "Day by day give us our daily bread."

4. The Rock of Horeb and the Living Water, representing the Holy Spirit as the supply of our spiritual life through Jesus Christ. The

Rock represents Christ, but the Water represents the Holy Ghost, who flows from His riven side.

There were three stages in the history of this Rock and its lessons. The first was when the Rock was smitten at Horeb and the water gushed forth, representing Christ's crucifixion and the coming of the Holy Spirit. But there was another stage forty years later, when they came to Kadesh and again were without water. Then God commanded Moses not to strike the Rock, for it was already smitten and open, but to "speak to the Rock," and the water would flow forth at the bidding of faith and satisfy their need. Moses despised this gentle command, and rashly struck the Rock three times with the tender rod of the high priest. The result was God was angry at his unbelief and rashness of spirit, and debarred him in consequence from the Promised Land. At the same time the water came all the same. The promise of God was fulfilled and the full tides overflowed, satisfying man and beast from the living fountain.

This represents the second or deeper out-

flow of the Holy Spirit when we come to Him in full consecration and simple trust, not to open the fountain which is already there through Christ's finished work, but to take, at the bidding of simple faith, the fulness that is waiting to satisfy all our need. This represents the Holy Ghost in His deeper work in the consecrated heart. It is the water of Kadesh, which means holiness. It is the baptism of sanctification and of power from on high.

But there was a third manifestation of that flowing rock. It is referred to here in the tenth chapter of first Corinthians by the phrase, "That Rock which followed them." How could the rock follow them? Why, in a very simple way. The Rock itself did not move, but the waters that poured from it followed them like a stream through the desert. Sometimes the stream was out of sight, and they seemed to be in a desolate and barren wilderness with nought but mounds of arid sand without a drop of moisture. But even then the water was following them, and the stream was flowing as a subterranean river far down beneath their feet, and they had but to stop

and dig a well in the desert, and lo! the waters burst forth and flowed again until they covered all the land.

This is beautifully described in one of the chapters of Numbers, where the people are represented as gathering in a circle in the sand and lifting up their voices in song, crying, "Spring up, O well!" The princes with their staves dig, and soon, lo! the gurgling waters burst through their barriers and the fountain pours out its living stream to satisfy the thirsty multitude and their panting flocks and herds.

So, along life's desert way we, too, may strike down into the barren sands with the staff of promise and the song of faith, and we shall find the deep tides of His blessed fulness, and the Holy Ghost will overflow in blessing and satisfaction to our hearts and lives.

Such, then, were the ancient types and their precious meaning even to them. How much richer and sweeter the deeper fulness of truth and reality which the ends of the age have brought to us. Oh, let us prize that glorious fulfillment! God is expecting better men to-day than even Abraham and Moses, Joshua and

Caleb, and the saints, patriarchs and prophets of that morning twilight of the distant past.

II. Warnings of the past. While they had their examples they also had their beacons. Five distinct incidents are referred to with their lessons of solemn admonition for our times, for human nature is still just the same and as liable as then to sink into idolatry, licentiousness, worldliness, presumption and unbelief.

1. The first warning is against idolatry. "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, for it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Under the very shadow of Sinai, and with the noise of God's awful voice still ringing in their ears, they were ready at the slightest provocation to forget their sacred voices and join in a carnival of idolatrous revelry around the golden calf that their own hands had fashioned for a god.

Perhaps we may not worship idols so tangible, but our hearts are just as truly centered on idols of human flesh, idols of worldly ambition, idols of selfish desire and wilfulness. When John wrote his first epistle the danger

of literal idolatry had long passed away. After the days of the Babylonish captivity we never hear any more of Israel worshipping the gods of the heathen, and yet he says to these very disciples, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Surely he must mean the idol whose throne is in the heart and whose sway is an invisible kingdom of affection, desire and strong selfwill.

2. Licentiousness. "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them did, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." He refers to the experience of the Israelites with the daughters of Midian. After Balaam had failed to curse Israel he persuaded them to meet with beautiful women of the neighboring tribe of the Midianites, and as they mingled in the dance and in the song they were seduced by the wiles and attractions of the ungodly Midianites, and in reckless abandonment plunged into all the excesses of sin until the fearful judgment of God alone awoke them from their foolish madness. If God were to deal today as He dealt with Israel, how many would be left on our church rolls? And yet, how much baser

the sin of uncleanness is in the light of Christianity and the spotless life of Jesus Christ and the ineffable purity of the Holy Ghost than in the rude, semi-barbarous days of ancient Israel. There is no sin against which God has flashed out His fierce detestation and anger as against the sin of licentiousness, in which no true child of God can allow himself wilfully to indulge. If for a moment any one who names the name of Christ has been tempted from the path of purity, the only hope for salvation is to fly from the very appearance of evil as you would fly from the yawning mouth of hell.

3. Worldly desire, the lusting after evil things (verse 6). This would seem to imply that the real source of all sin is in the spirit of our own desires. The last of the Ten Commandments strikes down to the very tap-root of all evil, "Thou shalt not covet." All sin commences with the kindling of forbidden desire. The apostle James gives us the pedigree, "Every man is tempted when he is turned away of his own lust and enticed; then when lust and desire hath conceived it bringeth

forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The secret of victory, therefore, is not to allow the mind and heart to dwell for a moment upon any forbidden thing. Therefore it is true that "the thought of foolishness is sin." It is the germ of sin. It breeds actual sin. The whole life of modern Christians is terribly fitted to stimulate unholy desire. The little child is taught from infancy to covet the vain and glittering attractions of the world—dress, equipage, pleasure, praise, fashion, display and a thousand worldly allurements. These are things that are absorbing the hearts of men and women, and they leave no room for God. It is all summed up in one great word, "Mammon," which stands for everything which antagonizes God, and especially for this great, godless and absorbing world with all its countless snares, attractions and vanities. They began by lusting after the leeks and onions of Egypt, and they ended by lusting after the pomp and glory of earthly kings and courts until they got what they wanted, and the issue of it all was the loss of Canaan first, and the loss of God afterward, and the bitter bondage

of subjection and captivity at the hand of the very kings whose dazzling glories had beguiled them.

4. The next sin against which He warns us by their example is the sin of presumption. "Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them tempted." They seem to have tempted God in various ways. One of them was by limiting His power saying, "Can God spread a table in the wilderness?" Another was questioning His love. They might all be summed up in the word unbelief. There is nothing so tempts God as doubt, and it was their unbelief that lost them the Land of Promise, and it will lose us the pardon of our sins, the baptism of the Spirit, the blessing of sanctification, the healing of our bodies, the answer of our prayers and even part in the coming of our Lord.

5. The last of their dangers which He holds up as a warning to us is the spirit of murmuring. "Neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer." Their entire declension, which culminated in God's awful oath that they should not enter into His rest, all began with the one

little sentence, "The people, as it were, murmured against Moses and against God." It was just the faintest kind of murmuring. It was one fly in the ointment, one speck on the spotless linen, one worm in the fruit, one blot of leprosy on the healthy face. We cannot afford for an instant to lose our joy. The spirit of depression and discontent leaves us open to every temptation and danger. We must trust in the Lord forever, rejoice evermore, in everything give thanks and always triumph in Christ Jesus.

III. These, beloved, are the incitements and the admonitions of the sacred past calling us at once both to hope and fear. And in view of all, the great apostle, finally, in the third place, impresses upon us with great solemnity the responsibilities and privileges of our solemn place as those who are living in the end of the age. As you have seen the child trundling its little hoop by touching it on both sides alternately to keep it from either extreme, so God teaches us both with warning and with promise as our spiritual condition requires. Sometimes it is warning we need, and He shouts in our ear

the solemn admonition, as a mother would cry to her babe in wild alarm if she was, too, in danger of falling over the precipice. But, again, when we are in danger of being too much depressed He speaks to us with notes of encouragement and promise, and He tells us there is no real danger of our failing utterly, and that He will never suffer us to be tempted above what we are able. And so we hear Him saying on one hand, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" but immediately after adding on the other side, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it."

On the one hand then, brethren, let us go forth with deep and holy seriousness; on the other, with divine encouragement and confidence. He assures us of His restraining and sustaining grace. He will keep back the flood from going too far. There is nothing can come to us but He allows and can prevent and will arrest before it goes too far. On the other hand, He will sustain us. He will give us a

way to escape. He will deliver us from evil. What is that way of escape? It is not always our way of fighting our own battles. It is rather the way of flying into the open arms of Jesus, letting Him fight the battle for us and rest us on His peaceful breast. Then armed both with hope and fear let us go forth into the days before us. Days of blessing they will doubtless be; days of trial they are sure to be. The ends of the age are upon us. The hosts of hell and earth are massing for the final conflict. Let us not expect easy circumstances or dress parades, but set our faces as a flint to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, and, "withstanding in the evil day," at last, having done all, stand approved, triumphant, crowned at the coming of our blessed Lord. God has honored us by letting us stand "in the ends of the age," guarding, as it were, the very bridal chamber of our coming Lord, and opening the gates for the marriage of the Lord. Surely He expects of us more than He expected of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Elijah or Paul! Shall He be disappointed? Shall He find us wholly true?

THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.” I. Cor. xi. 23 to 26.

TN his comprehensive manual of the Christian Church the apostle next takes up the ordinances of the Church, more especially the sacred ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, calling attention first to the prevalent abuses among them with respect to this ordinance; and next, unfolding with deep tenderness and fulness the nature and design of this beautiful rite, and the true spirit of its observance.

I. Abuses in connection with the Lord’s Supper.

1. The first of these was the spirit of division in the Church, "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it, for there must also be sects (margin) among you that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

✓ The Lord's Supper is a beautiful type of the unity of the Church of Christ. Speaking of it in the tenth chapter, he says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."

We are to discern the Lord's body in this ordinance, and that does not merely mean His personal body, but His mystical body, the Church, which is one in Him. It is therefore a sin against the Head, and an abuse of this symbolical ordinance, to come to the communion table with divisions, strifes or alienations. We are to sit here as brethren, and every wrong should be righted, and every grievance

healed, before we partake of the same bread and the same cup. To this, more than any other spiritual service, does the command of the Saviour apply, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift."

2. The next abuse was the coarse and sensual indulgence of their appetites by turning this sacred rite into a common feast, eating and drinking in gross and shameful sensuality. The apostle condemns this in unmeasured terms, and it is scarcely necessary that we should emphasize or dwell upon this part of the subject. It is utterly removed from the very idea of the worldly feast or heathen banquet, the elements in it purely symbolical of higher spiritual things, and the earthly and physical only meant to be a stepping-stone to the spiritual and divine.

3. The next abuse is one in which we are more likely to share. He defines it as not discerning the Lord's body. It is a failure to understand and enter into the deep spiritual

meaning of this holy ordinance, or spiritual apathy and indifference. We are to engage in this service with mind and heart intent upon its great central object, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and we are to meet with Him, and recognize Him in His personal presence, His suffering love, and especially the great fact here commemorated, His atoning death for us upon the cross.

Our abuse of the Lord's Supper is a very serious matter, and we are here taught that it is certain to bring upon us God's marked and severe chastenings. "For this cause," he tells them, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Disease comes in consequence of such irreverent and sacrilegious conduct, and even life is prematurely shortened, and untimely death is often the penalty of such sin.

There is no doubt, on the one hand, that the Lord's Supper is very intimately connected with our physical life, and it brings to us the actual bodily strength of the Lord Jesus Christ if we rightly partake. And so, on the other hand, it brings to us sickness and death if we abuse it.

The two-edged sword cuts both ways, either in blessing or in judgment as we meet it. There is no doubt that many Christians are suffering from sickness, and perhaps their very lives have been shortened because they have sat down at this holy table cherishing willfully unholy resentments and knowingly indulging in the forbidden things.

These judgments are not penal and permanent. The word "damnation," used in the twenty-ninth verse, is most unfortunate. Its proper translation is simply judgment, and these judgments are explained in a later verse as the gracious chastenings of the Lord to bring us to repentance so that we shall not "be condemned with the world." The way to avert such judgments is by the self-examination here prescribed, "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged" (verse 31). The moment we see our fault, and penitently and obediently turn from it, the judgment is immediately turned away. "Let a man, therefore, examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

II. The true nature and right observance of the Lord's Supper.

1. Attention is first called to its institution. This is very marked and definite. "I have received from the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." This seems to have been a special revelation given to Paul for the Gentile churches, lest they should be tempted to think that it was merely a Jewish rite. Thinking of us all through the coming ages our blessed Master gave this special revelation to Paul, the apostle, for the Gentiles, that we might know that down to the end of time He was thinking of us and lovingly assuring us of His personal remembrance.

2. The associations of this institution are also very touching. "On that night on which He was betrayed" is the dark background. Surely He had enough trouble to absorb His attention to Himself, but He was only thinking of us and providing for our comfort in the future ages. Over against that dark background of betrayal it is not hard to read the lines that tell of His faithful love, and the

thought in His heart that would call for our love and faithfulness in return.

3. The emblems used are full of beautiful fitness and significance. The bread is a whole parable of suffering love. First, the seed was planted, and had to die before it could spring into life and become the living grain. Then the grain had to be crushed before it could become material for bread. Then the very meal had to be kneaded, beaten and exposed to intense heat in the fiery oven before it could become bread. All this lies back of the heavenly Bread on which we feed today.

Then, the wine is crushed from the grape and flows like the living blood, and tells of life poured out and life poured in. It is the most perfect type of the Saviour's very life given for us and given to us.

4. The words of the institution are a whole theology. "This is my body" is a figurative statement of the doctrine of the incarnation. It tells us of Bethlehem and the manger; of the Son of God becoming the Son of man; of the oneness of our kinsman Redeemer with our very nature. He who meets us today is our Brother

forevermore, flesh of our flesh, heart of our heart, life of our life, very Man as well as very God.

Next, "Broken." How it tells of the nails, and the spear, the drooping head, and the dying agony; the atoning death; the shameful cross; the doctrine of the great Sacrifice. The theologies may go wrong, and the standards of the Church may change, but the Lord's Supper forever will bear witness to the true cross and the blood-marked way of life.

"For you." This is the great truth of substitution. It was a vicarious sacrifice. It was for others that He died. It was for us. It was for ME.

Next, the appeal, "Take, eat," expresses the whole truth of appropriating faith. "Take" is the first act of faith which claims our salvation. "Eat" is the deeper experience which enters into, realizes and enjoys the blessing which we claim, the Christ whom we receive.

Next, we have the life of consecration and obedience in the sweet verse, "This do in remembrance of Me." It becomes a watchword for every day and every act; a loving reminder

saying to us every moment, "This do, and this, and this for My sake, for love of Me."

And, finally, the blessed hope of His coming shines out clearly and gloriously in the last word, "Till He come." Out across the gulf of sorrow, the cross, the grave, the changes that lie between time's rolling flood, our lives with their changes and their sorrows, away across time He was looking, and we are to look this day and from this place, to the sunlit heights of glory, to the blessed morning of His return, to the unspeakable meaning of those three little monosyllables, "Till He come." What a theology! What a Christology! What an alphabet of truth stands out in vivid characters of light and love from this memorial table with its elemental signs and suggestive words of redeeming love!

5. The names that have been given to this sacred ordinance are also suggestive of precious and profitable things. One of its latest names is the Eucharist. This means a service of thanksgiving and praise. It is an expression of our gratitude for the unspeakable blessings of redemption, and it is suggested by the first act of the Lord Jesus Christ in the ordinance:

“When He had given thanks He blessed and brake.” It ought to be a season of deep thankfulness and holy joy.

Another traditional name is the Sacrament. This is derived from an old Latin word, *sacramentum*, meaning an oath. It was the oath of enlistment which the Roman soldier took when he entered the service of the state. It expresses, therefore, the idea of our dedication to God, and engagement in His service to be loyal and true to our Master. It is thus connected with the idea of a profession of faith and consecration of life. It is not a Scriptural expression, but it represents a Scriptural idea.

The word “communion” is very frequently applied to this service. This is a Scriptural word, and it denotes our fellowship with the Lord Jesus and with one another at this sacred table.

The Lord’s Supper is the more Scriptural and comprehensive term for this ordinance. This expression denotes spiritual nourishment and heavenly sustenance.

Briefly summing up the purpose of the Lord’s Supper we may say:

a. That it is a service of Commemoration, not only recalling to our minds but signaling and publicly honoring the memory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and especially of His death for us as the supreme act of His life and love.

b. It is a service of Communion, not only bringing the remembrance of the Lord, but bringing His own personal presence in living communion with us and loving fellowship with one another.

c. It is the means not only for communion but of Communication of His life and grace to us. It is thus a means of grace and a channel of actual spiritual impartation from Him to those who are in living fellowship with Him. We strike here the great Romish heresy of transubstantiation. This is an honest and sincere attempt of the human heart to find something true after which it is feeling. That something is the real presence and the physical presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. The Romanist has tried to explain this as the literal flesh of the Lord Jesus in the wafer of which he partakes; but it would be of little use to us to partake of the flesh of Christ even if it were present. Back

of this error lies the real truth that has been overlooked by the Church of God, that is, the truth expressed in the sixth chapter of John, "I am the Bread of Life; I am the living Bread. He that eateth Me shall live by Me. My flesh I will give for the life of the world. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Here He promises us not only spiritual life, but physical life from His own body. This is the blessed truth which our faith has learned to apprehend in the Lord's Supper. It is the truth commonly known as divine healing. It is deeper than mere healing, and it is the actual participation in the physical strength, vitality and energy of our risen Lord. It is again and again referred to in the writings of St. Paul by the Lord's Supper, and is especially to us glorious and vivid, simple and expressive.

d. One more truth in connection with this ordinance is expressed in this word, Covenant. It is the milestone on life's way. It is a time and a place to take blessings for days to come, and looking back to where we have failed, and forward to all we may meet, renew afresh

our covenant with Him for His all-sufficient grace for spirit, soul and body, home and business, circumstances and service, time and eternity, and go forth with His blessed assurance, "Certainly I will be with thee, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." "As thy days so shall thy strength be."

And now, in conclusion, it only remains that we shall sum up in practical application the precious lessons of this subject. How shall we prepare for the Lord's table? How shall we partake of this holy feast?

First, let us do so with honest self-examination, not to know if we are Christians—that ought to have been settled long ago—but to know that we are in actual and habitual exercise of all that belongs to a true Christian life, and to know the needs that we are to bring and the grace that we are to claim at His blessed feet.

Next, we are to exercise our minds and memories in intelligent recollection and realization of His love to us in His life and death of sacrifice, and in the personal story of our own salvation and all the providences of our life. We are

to think of the way that He has led us, and remember all His love until our hearts shall bring Him an oblation of grateful praise.

Next, we are to meet with Him to touch Him, to listen to His voice, to rest upon His bosom and to take His loving promises as we go forth as they went from the mountain in Galilee and the upper chamber in Jerusalem.

Then we are to reach out to a larger love and a closer fellowship with our brethren. We are to enter into the communion of saints, and take His blessing for the whole family in heaven and on the earth for the gathering and preparation of the Bride and for the completing of the whole body of Christ. It is to be a radiating as well as a rallying point from which we shall go forth with a love as large as His to bless the whole world.

Finally, we are to look out from this watch tower to the morning star, to the rising day, to the advent glory, to the millennial age, and go forth looking for and hasting forward the coming of our precious Lord.

THE SUPERNATURAL GIFTS AND THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH.

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. I. Cor. xii. 1.

IF there was danger of ignorance concerning the spiritual gifts of the Church in the apostle's day, how much greater that danger today! The tendency of modern religious thought is to eliminate the supernatural from the Bible, the Church and the life of the Christian, and reduce religion to a form of human culture and the Church to a religious club, bound together by social affinities, entertained by intellectual culture and sacred art, and moderately exercised and occupied in respectable forms of benevolence and usefulness. It is scarcely respectable to recognize any such thing as a personal or present Deity, the supernatural answer to prayer, or any extraordinary occurrence which claims to be miraculous and is not subject to scientific explanation.

Meanwhile the devil is producing and exercising his supernatural gifts, and so endeavoring, with not a little success, to palm himself off as God, to establish his claims on the credulity of those who will not receive the divine and holy religion of Christ.

The only way to meet the counterfeit is by the true. The facts of spiritualism and its kindred errors are undoubtedly real, and they can only be met by the divine realities which are as much mightier than they as they are more pure and consistent with the character of God and the wellbeing of man.

Closely related to the manifestations of Satanic power are the extravagances, fanaticisms and mistakes of honest and well-meaning Christians who are in danger of accepting delusions for divine manifestations, and thus throwing doubt upon the real facts of God's supernatural power which do exist. On the one hand there is danger of utter naturalism, rejecting all that is supernatural; and, on the other, there is danger of a false supernaturalism, counterfeiting the workings of God's power or substituting for them the workings

of demon power, which are to be the most marked features of the last days.

The only security for the balance of truth between these two extremes lies in our not being ignorant concerning spiritual gifts, but rightly understanding, exercising and exhibiting to the world the real power of God in harmony with the Scriptures and guarded from the extremes and extravagances of human error and Satanic delusion.

I. The supernatural gifts bestowed upon the Church by her ascended Lord.

The Greek word for these gifts is *Charismata*, and it is used to denote the gifts of power for service which constituted the Pentecostal endowment of the Church.

It was customary for Roman conquerors, when they entered the city in triumph, or for great potentates, when signalizing their coronation or entrance upon some great office, to distribute largesses, and scatter costly gifts of treasure along the avenues through which they passed. So when Christ "ascended on high, He gave gifts unto men," and abundantly distributed to the waiting disciples the rich and

varied gifts of the Holy Ghost. Jewels they were in the costly robes of His glorious Bride, the insignia and tokens of her high honor and fellowship in His kingly glory and mighty power. These *Charismata* are specifically described in this chapter.

X The first of these gifts is wisdom (verse 8), that divine quality which discerns the actual situation, and knows how to act under all circumstances. It is distinguished from knowledge, the next gift, in this respect, that knowledge has to do with truth and wisdom with conduct. Knowledge is intellectual; wisdom is practical. Knowledge enables us to understand God's Word, wisdom, to apply it to the case in hand. The two together constitute our perfect investiture for intelligent and effective service.

2401. The next of these gifts is faith. This does not mean faith for our personal salvation, for that is the privilege and duty of all believers and, in fact, is essential to salvation. This is the special faith given by the Holy Ghost to enable us to exercise our Christian ministries, to claim the answers to our prayers and to

take the power of God which is awaiting our appropriation.

Then come the gifts of healing. They are spoken of in the plural. There are various forms and ministries of healing. They are distinguished from miracles in the next clause. These also are gifts of the Spirit. They are undoubtedly recognized here as included in the Church's endowment of power. There is no hint here, or indeed anywhere in the New Testament, that the age of miracles is past. That is one of the axioms of modern theology, but it has no countenance from the Scriptures. God always intended His Church to be as supernatural and as divine as the host that marched through the wilderness of old behind the pillar of cloud and fire, and left the footprints of the Deity all along their unearthly way.

But miracles and gifts of healing are not necessarily the same. There are many cases of healing that are not miracles, and there are some that are. There is a quiet, normal receiving of divine life for our physical frame which becomes as natural as breathing, and almost as spontaneous. It is not mere constitu-

tional strength. It comes from God, but it comes through the operation of the spiritual law into which we may rise, and through which we can appropriate supernatural strength from our living Lord just as freely as we take the oxygen from the air and absorb the sunshine from the sky.

A miracle is somewhat different. It is more bold and startling, involving a suspension of natural law and an effect so impressive as to become to all observers a distinct manifestation of the presence and power of God. These meteor flashes of supernatural power would lose their very emphasis if they were to become so frequent as to cease to be extraordinary. Both have a place in the economy of the Church and among the gifts of the Spirit.

Then we have the gift of prophecy specially denoting the ministry which gives to men the direct messages of God. It is not always the power to foretell future events. A prophet is rather a divine messenger, the man who catches
× the mind of his Master and gives it out to his
× fellowmen at the divine direction. He is not
× so much a teacher of the written Word as a

messenger of the very thing that God would say at the time to the generation to which he speaks or the community to whom he bears witness. The definition of a prophet given by the apostle in the fourteenth chapter of first Corinthians, verse three, is very satisfactory. "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation and comfort." The prophet, therefore, while including the office of teacher in this chapter, more especially carries with it, we believe, the idea of specially witnessing, in the immediate power and unction of the Holy Spirit, the messages of God to men.

Then come the gifts of discerning of spirits and divers tongues with the associated gift of interpretation of tongues, which was the power to translate and understand the message given by another in an unknown tongue. This makes it very certain that the language in which the ministry of tongues was exercised was not always the language of the people who were addressed. It could not, therefore, be a vehicle for missionary work. In that case no interpretation would be needed, and the neces-

sity for an interpreter would obviate its very intention. It was not for this purpose that it was given, but rather as an expression of lofty spiritual feeling and the intense moving of the heart, the subject of this gift, by the divine Spirit leading him to express the state of spiritual elevation by which he was moved in some utterance, which, while not always intelligible, yet always left the impression of divine presence and power.

This gift seems to have been abused from an early period, and turned rather to the display of spiritual pride than to the edification of the Church, and appears to have been withdrawn, in a great measure, at least, at an early day. Its apparent revival in modern times has been associated with much confusion, and created grave doubts respecting its pre-eminent value as compared, at least, with other gifts of the Spirit. In the classification of the *Charismata* at the end of this chapter it is quite significant that it is mentioned last, and we find the apostle himself declaring in another place, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding

that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

II. The Holy Spirit is the source of all these gifts, and is the divine Agent who exercises them in the Church and through its members.

We are deeply thankful to the Holy Spirit for a single verse in this chapter which shuts out all possibility of spiritual pride and human glory in connection with the gifts and the ministries of the Spirit. It is the eleventh verse, in which we are told that all these gifts “worketh that one and the self-same Spirit.” Literally this means all these gifts worketh the Spirit Himself. The man is but an instrument. Even the gift is not a permanent quality in man, but the divine Presence uses him for the time in the exercise of the ministry in which God holds the power, and the subject is but His humble instrument. No man, therefore, can call these works his works, or these gifts his gifts, or this power his own. Very wisely the Master has said in anticipation of this very danger, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth, and lo! I am with you.” He is the power and we have Him. Whenever,

therefore, we see the spirit of self-display, human exaltation and adulation, the advertising of men and the disposition to glory in even the most honored servants of God, we may know that we are on forbidden ground, and in danger of sacriligiously abusing the very grace of God and worshipping the creature more than the Creator. Every gift and ministry is dependent upon our contact with the Holy Spirit every moment. We have no strength apart from Him, and if we had, our power would become our curse and our own weight would sink us where once the archangels fell through their own self-conscious brilliancy and self-centered pride.

x III. The Holy Spirit in His supernatural powers is given to every disciple who will receive and use His supernatural powers for the purposes intended. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (Verse 7). This supernatural enduement is not an exclusive privilege of favor to the few. x The Holy Ghost is poured today upon all flesh. You cannot have a private wire to your office or the use of a telephone without some ex-

pense, but every disciple can have the ear of heaven at any moment and draw from the infinite resources of the skies all needed strength for all emergencies and ministries.

Like the pound in the parable of the nineteenth chapter of Luke, given to all the servants equally, and yet the time came when that single pound had been multiplied in the case of one of these servants to ten pounds. They all started on equal footing, but they did not so end their service or stand before their judge. What was the secret of the difference? The faithful and profitable servants invested their pound and added interest by trading.

Is not this the meaning of the apostle in this chapter when he speaks of the Spirit being given to every man to "profit withal?" Does it not mean that we may use or neglect this great investment, and that it may become a spiritual fortune or a spiritual default as we improve it or neglect it? To each of us is given, not part of the Holy Ghost, not a touch of His finger, but the Holy Ghost Himself in His personal and undivided fulness, and we may have just as much of this power as we will utilize and ex-

pend for His glory and the service committed to our hands. Those who wisely use it will find at last that their efficiency has multiplied tenfold, while those who simply hoard it will stand condemned before their Lord and lose even that which they for a little seemed to have.

What a responsibility this truth throws upon us! Are we using all the possibilities of grace? Are we improving the investments of the Master committed to our hands? Are we growing in spiritual usefulness and efficiency? Are we going to meet our Master to hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, be thou ruler over many?"

IV. The diversity of spiritual gifts and ministries is very clearly pointed out in this passage. The apostle speaks of three different things—gifts, ministries and works, or operations. He says there are different gifts. There are also different ministries or spheres providentially assigned to us, consequently there are different works performed by us. There seems to be a distinct allusion to the three persons of

the Trinity in these three classifications of gifts, spheres and services. Some persons are specially fitted by their gifts for one line of ministry. Then, their providential environments are different and call them to various duties. Consequently their work will be different.

One is called and fitted to be a business man. To him is given wisdom, faith and service in the large field of usefulness, and it is not necessary for him to leave his sphere in order to exercise a Holy Ghost ministry. There is no need today so great in the Church as the need of men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, like Stephen of old, and fitted to represent Christ in the place where business experience, wise counsels, wide influence, are of peculiar value. In our great missionary operations and in the magnificent work committed to the Church of Christ, for God has His ambassadors to mankind.

Another is called and fitted for the ministries of the home or school, or perhaps for the work of faithful helping, serving, superintending, executive talent, and there are no people

so scarce, to be as wise, well-balanced and sweetly-tempered workers for many departments in any great movement which require at once capacity and at the same time holy, loving character and selfish fidelity and loyalty.

Again, another is called to the special ministry of understanding and teaching the Word of God. Another is more fitted for evangelistic work. Another is called and fitted to minister to the sick, and lead them to trust in God and take His healing power. Others again are called to the ministry of evangelization, to the bold, aggressive work of the foreign field, to the rescue home or mission, the patient pastoral oversight of the flock of Christ, to the cry of the little ones, to the uplifting of the fallen. Each of these is legitimate, and for each of these the Holy Ghost has the fitting qualifications and will accept and bless the works that follow. Let us, therefore, not lose our life in wishing we had some one else's work, but let us find the sphere to which we belong; let us take the gifts that will fit us for it, and let us present the works to God as a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour. Be yourself and

be your best and God will use you much more than if you try to be somebody else.

V. The principle of unity in all this diversity is essential. We are to recognize the work of others as part of our own. The most truly spiritual people are the people who can get on best with others, and very often God places us alongside of the most uncongenial and difficult associations for the very purpose of teaching us to adjust ourselves to everything. We cannot afford to meet with any one along life's pathway and fail to get along with them. He will probably keep us where we are until we have so learned His Spirit and been rounded and mellowed by His grace that we can keep rank in the host of God and walk in step with the most unsteady and uncongenial of our brethren. Long ago God taught David to rejoice in a work which he was to plan and another was to perform, and in one of his first lessons on service the Lord Jesus taught His disciples that "one soweth and another reapeth," and he that soweth and he that reapeth must learn to rejoice together.

VI. The order of spiritual gifts is very in-

structive, encouraging and also humbling. The first-mentioned gifts are those of the apostles, prophets and teachers, the spiritual ministries of the Church. Next come the miraculous gifts of healing subordinate to spiritual ministry—important but not pre-eminent. Thirdly come the helps, people that just fit in, and by love, fellowship, prayer and often subordinate service fill up the innumerable places and become the countless links without which all else would be in vain. After these, in a lower order, come the governments, the rulers, the people with authority, wisely placed near the bottom to keep them from falling over with the weight of their importance. No one can rule another until he has walked in the ranks and learned to keep his head low.

The last in the procession are the gifts of tongues, the showy gifts that sometimes turn the heads of ambitious disciples, and have been least honored of all the supernatural enduements of the Christian Church.

VII. A right ambition for the widest and highest usefulness is encouraged. "Covet earnestly the best gifts." God wants us to be am-

bitious for service, and not only for one kind of service, but for as many kinds as we can faithfully add to the record of a useful life. If we fulfill one ministry well He will add another if we can be trusted with it, and the one pound may at last grow to ten. It is right that we should recognize this life as full of unspeakable prospects and possibilities for the higher ministries and the eternal honors of the age to come. We are candidates for the great government appointments in the mighty empire of the future. Let us be ambitious to show ourselves fitted for the highest place. Our lot is cast in the times of intensest interest and importance. We are on the threshold of the coming kingdom. We are in the midst of a mighty competition. Prophets and martyrs are already waiting for their appointments. Busy and earnest lives today are sweeping on in the power of the Holy Ghost. Beloved, do not let us be left behind. May God arouse us from lethargy, apathy and trifling. We have a glorious crown to win. We have a living age in which to win it. We have one short life to accomplish. We have the mighty Holy

Ghost to enable us to win the conflict and gain the prize. Let us covet earnestly the best gifts, and let all our being be invested in the one stupendous opportunity of a life for God, for humanity and for an eternal prize.

LOVE, THE CROWNING GRACE OF THE CHURCH AND THE CHRISTIAN.

“Covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet I show unto you a more excellent way.” I. Cor. xiii. 31.

“And now abideth faith, hope and love; but the greatest of these is love.” I. Cor. xii. 13.



THE apostle, having spoken of the various other gifts of the Holy Ghost, next turns to the highest of all gifts, the crowning grace of love. The gifts of power are the jewels upon the robes of the Bride. Love is the robe itself; the very texture and tissue of the spiritual life. Those are things which we may have, but this is something which we must be, for love is not an accompaniment, an adornment, or even an attribute of character; it is character itself, for as God is love so love is the substance of the believer's life. This sublime chapter is a portrait of the divine love and a delineation of the features of the Christ life.

We owe it, as we owe many other precious

things, to the very faults which it was intended to correct. The chief fault of the Corinthian Christians was the lack of love and the spirit of disunion, division and strife. Just as Christ's most gracious words were often called forth by the very aggravations of human unworthiness and sin, so this most perfect picture of the ideal life has for its frame and its background a state of things as unlike the ideal here presented as it is possible to conceive, a situation which had its prototype in the Corinthian church, and its parallel, in too many instances, in the Church today.

It is delineation marked by the most acute analysis and the most skilled art. It is at once a portrait, a poem and a panegyric of love. It is always difficult to analyze a living organism without destroying life in the process of dissection. It is like pulling a flower to pieces, or dissecting a face to find its charm, and losing your flower and the general impression of your portrait in the analysis. And yet it is well for the purposes of practical application, and as a touchstone by which to search our own hearts, to follow the keen analysis of this picture into

all the depths and ramifications of our own soul until we stand convicted and exposed in the light of divine love and the humiliating view of our own unlikeness.

I. The negative qualities. It is very impressive to notice how much of character consists in what we are not and do not say or do. The Ten Commandments consist chiefly of "Thou shalt not." The first requirement that the Lord Jesus Christ laid down in connection with discipleship was self-denial. Now, to deny self is not to torment, lacerate and inflict penance on yourself. It simply means to say "No" to yourself, to suppress yourself, to refuse to obey yourself, your own will, impulse and preference. It is just a great *not* laid across human nature's path.

Now, love consists largely in *nots*. If you do nothing more than simply keep still, hold back and suppress yourself you will have lived the larger half of the life of love. You may think this very tedious, trifling and unnecessary trouble, but you will find that it is the little foxes that destroy the vines, and the little negligences of Christian watchfulness which per-

porate the organism of a holy life, and let your love and joy leak out as from broken vessels.

a. "Love envieth not." She has no jealousy of others; she is not unhappy over their successes or happiness. She is not watching for their defeat or failure, nor criticizing their achievements and victories. She looks on with calm and artless simplicity and frankness when they are successful, appreciated, praised and honored. She is incapable of a mean or unworthy suspicion or treacherous blow at the character or happiness of any human being. It simply is not in her to feel and do such things. First in the brood of hell is the low, groveling serpent of envy, jealousy and suspicion.

b. The next negative quality is conceit, vanity and braggard vain-glory. She "vaunteth not" herself. She is modest. She never boasts. She never wants people to advertise her, appreciate and praise her. This is the mildest form of the demon of pride. It is more concerned about what people think of us than about what we are, and it is satisfied with a name and a transient fame whether it deserves it or not. Love despises and disdains this spirit of vain-

glory, and shrinks instinctively from the glory of the public gaze and the arena of the world's empty fame.

c. Deeper and more dangerous is the quality of pride expressed by the next clause, "is not puffed up." This describes an exaggerated idea of ourselves; an undue estimate of our abilities and worth. It is associated frequently with indifference to public applause or criticism. Satisfied with its own good opinion, it scorns either the blame or the praise of men, but it has an egregious estimate of itself, and it grows into an intolerable egotism. It is interested in everything chiefly as it concerns the mighty "I," which stands in the centre of all its conversation, thought and plans. But love is removed from this false realm of exaggeration and pride. It estimates itself truly as nothing and less than nothing. It has found out that human nature is a failure. It has sentenced itself to death, and it has buried itself forever out of sight, and taken its life and reputation on borrowed capital through the merits and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. You must reach the place where you have for-

ever renounced your own rights and your own righteousness, and stand henceforth in humility and confidence in the name of Christ and righteousness alone.

d. The next antagonism of love is rudeness. She "doth not behave herself discourteously" or rudely. She does not do things that hurt, offend or wound others. Her manners are gentle and considerate. She does not cut people on the street or allow herself to freeze with studied chill the victims of her resentment. A soul baptized with love will always be gentle. The spirit of Jesus makes us gentlemen and ladies, and the grace of God transforms the manners of the barroom into the culture and even courtliness of the society of heaven.

e. The spirit of selfishness is the deep root from which all these things come, and against which love is a living protest. She "seeketh not her own." She has no place for self-seeking. Her one business is to seek the interest of others and the glory of her Master, and let Him care for all that concerns her rights and happiness. Human nature looks first at our end of things and asks, "How does this affect

me?" Love inverts this order and thinks first, "How will this please Him? How will this help others?"

f. Temper, irritation, exasperation and angry passion are utterly excluded from the life of love. She "is not provoked." It is scarcely necessary to say that the word "easily" is not in the original. The Holy Ghost gives no place for paroxysms of anger. It is true that a Christian may fall into them, but if he does it is because he has fallen back into the flesh, and is not walking in the Spirit. It is not he that is doing and saying these things, but his old carnal heart and nature, and it is just as real a case of backsliding as if he had fallen into open immorality.

g. Love affects the memory. It has no malignant recollection. It keeps no record of wrongs. It "thinketh no evil," or rather, "maketh no account of evil." It does not cover over the fault today and carefully put it away in reserve for use tomorrow if something should provoke a reference to it. It ingeniously and cordially drops the past, forgets the fault, and acts as if it had not been.

h. Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity." This seems to refer to the case of those who have done us wrong, and afterwards meet the retribution that their wrong deserved by coming into wrong themselves. God often punishes people for an injustice by allowing them to fall into sin, and to meet the consequences of that for which they have already blamed some one else with harsh and unjust severity. Now, we are not to take advantage of this and take pleasure in the misfortunes of our enemies, even when God may have brought that upon them as a retribution for their wrongs to others. True, God avenges His people's wrong, but we must let Him do this without our interference. Indeed, when we know it we must meet their calamities with the spirit of compassion, and pray for them who have despitely used us and abused us. There is no time when you are in so much danger as when you find that God has been dealing with some one because of their injustice to you, and you are tempted to say, "They are getting what they deserved because of their treatment of me." That is the only way to rise above those things and meet God's

test of your love with the love that would save them from the judgments which they have brought upon themselves.

II. The positive qualities of love.

a. She "is kind." This is a word that describes the benignity of love in the simplest, sweetest and most human way. The root of the word is "kin," and it literally denotes the kindness with which we would treat one who is our relative and belonged to our own family. It describes that spirit that instinctively loves to do others good. It is just goodness, beneficence and benevolence.

b. "Love rejoiceth with" or "in the truth." This lifts its spirit and sphere above mere personality and partisanship. It isn't just a preference for one or two individuals because they please us, but it is a high and holy sympathy with the truth, with the cause of Christ, with the things that He loves and approves, and it gives a tone or rightness and loftiness to all our attachments. It keeps love back from entanglements with faults and wrongs. It is a loyalty that is always on God's side and loves our

friends in Him, for Him and as part of His great cause.

c. It "believeth all things." That is, when things seem all contrary to love, love still believes in spite of the seeming, and by believing lifts its object up to that for which we believe. Thus God treated His ancient people. He said, "They are My people, children that will not lie." They did not deserve His confidence, but He gave them His confidence, and by confidence and grace lifted them up to deserve it and loved them into it. So He takes the sinner who is unworthy of confidence, and, blotting out his sin, He takes them into the place of a child, and treats him as a sinner no longer, but as a child of His love. So He takes the earthborn soul, the fallen child of Adam's race, and He speaks of him as in the heavenly places, and counts him as if already glorified and seated with Christ upon the throne. God believes for us and treats us as He believes. So let us believe for others, and love by faith where we cannot love by sight.

d. Love "hopeth all things." When faith fails and seems long to wait in vain for the

realization, then hope comes to her aid and says, "It is not, but it shall be." "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." "Some day this soul will be brighter than an angel and whiter than the snow." So love hopes forever and clothes her object with the glory of her expectation.

What a blessed uplift this is to our own discouraged hearts! God give us the love that believes all things and hopes all things.

III. The passive qualities of love.

The sublime picture of this heavenly grace is, as the suffering One. She steps upon the stage, "suffering long," and she passes off it, "bearing all things, enduring all things." The long suffering has reference to her capacity for continued forbearance. The bearing has reference to the faults of others, and is translated sometimes, "covereth all things;" and the enduring has reference to the trials that come to us from the hand of God. Now let us remember that this is not stoical endurance, because we cannot help it, but loving enduring, because we do not look upon the dark side. We see it in the light of love.

This is the analysis of love; but how beautiful and divine it seems when we rise from the delineation, and see it full-orbed and shining in the face of Jesus Christ Himself. He is the impersonation of love. It was He who suffered long and was kind, who sought not His own, never was provoked, who made no account of evil, who believed all things, hoped all things, endured all things, and whose love never failed.

Is it necessary for us to dwell on the pre-eminence of such a grace above tongues, above prophecy, above knowledge, above faith, above even hope itself? The chief reason of love's pre-eminence is that love is the very essence and inherent quality of the heavenly life. It is not said anywhere that God is faith, or power, or wisdom, or even holiness. God has these attributes, but it *is* said that "God is Love." And so Christian character is love. When you abstract love you abstract the very tissue and essence of life itself. "Without love," the apostle says, "I am nothing." There isn't anybody there to wear the quality or use the gift. Love, therefore, is essential because intrinsic, the life

of our life, and the substance of our spiritual being, for God is our life and "God is love."

But it is necessary for us to ask, "How can we have this superlative gift?" and the answer is very plain. It is not a growth or development of human nature. It is wholly divine. It must come to us from above, and the only way to have it is by having Him. You cannot live in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians without having the experience of entire sanctification, and entire sanctification simply means the death of self and the union of the soul with God through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is not possible for human nature to live this chapter out. It is not possible for a converted Christian to do it unless he has received the very gift of gifts, the Spirit of Jesus to dwell within him. Its first use is to search your heart and utterly discourage you from attempting it in your own strength, and so throw you at His feet that you will accept Him and let Him live His life in you. Let us do this here and now, and expiring at the feet of love take love to be our resurrection life and Christ to re-live in us His own life once more.

But further, having done this, He will teach you, step by step, day by day, moment by moment, to watch against the things that militate against the life of love, and you will find that you must guard the crossroads, you must watch against the "nots," you must go down into the minutiae of life, and live out with Him in detail all the delineations of this chapter over which we have passed. This is where many fail. They want to have it come like some favoring gale, and bear them without a thought into the heavenly harbor. It is not so. Love must stand upon the bridge, and watch against the shoals and currents, and steer her course with ceaseless, patient toil, untiring to the goal.

There are two other thoughts suggested in the closing verses of this chapter that are very helpful in the experiences of the life of love. One is the childishness from which our strifes come. He seems to think of them as infantile follies which should be put away with the maturity of spiritual manhood.

The other thought is the imperfect knowledge by which most of our misunderstandings

come. We see, he says, as in an enigma and through a mirror. Now, the mirror distorts everything you see. When you look at another through a mirror you see them inverted; the right hand is where the left hand should be, and the whole figure is misplaced, and you must correct your impression by your knowledge of this fact. Now, you frequently see people and things as through a mirror, and you will find some day in the clear light of heaven that you saw everything wrong, and that you often formed your prejudices and your likes and your dislikes in blind and stupid ignorance through your distorted vision. True love is blind to the lights of earth and the vision of sense, and sees everything in the light of God; and if we live in the light of His love it will give a heavenly glory to all else around us.

I remember a glorious sunset once in which the clouds of the golden west were tinted like the chariots of some sublime procession, and as I gazed I saw that everything around me had taken on the heavenly hue, and I looked at the faces of my friends until they glowed in the purple and gold of the heavens above.

And if we live in the vision of God and in the love of Jesus we shall cover all around us with His beauty and His glory, and the things that otherwise would be dark and sad and strange will be lighted with the reflection of those skies, where the sun no more goes down and where evil shall never come again.



THE WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

“Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation, and comfort. When ye come together let every one of you have psalm, have a doctrine, have a tongue, have a revelation, have an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order. I. Cor. xiv. 1, 3, 26, 39 and 40.



WE find in this chapter and in some paragraphs of the eleventh chapter the apostle unfolding some important and practical principles relating to the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit in the worship and fellowship of the Church.

I. He emphasizes afresh the pre-eminence of love. “Follow after love,” he says. The verb is an intense one. Literally it means “pursue love” as the hunter pursues his game, as the miser pursues his gold. It is the most valuable of all attainments, therefore pursue

it. It is the most difficult of all attainments, therefore pursue it. It is the crowning perfection of Christian life. It may sometimes seem very tedious that we should, after long experience in the school of Christ, have to be held down to little tests and conflicts from day to day, when it would be much more delightful to sweep out into the larger scope of some great achievement, or even to bear some tremendous trial and be done with it. And yet the artist spends much more time in finishing the details of his picture than in drawing the outline. A few freehand touches will easily sketch the foreground and the perspective, but days and weeks and even months are spent in little touches, faint tints and deepening shades, and it is just these little touches that constitute the difference between the work of genius and the superficial attempt of an amateur. And so in the Christian life the finishing touches are the most important and often come very near the end. Let us not be weary in the school or easily give up the lesson, but let us follow after love, and so run that we may obtain. Let us always realize that more than all our works

and words, our seemingly great achievements, our most heroic sufferings, it is patience that perfects love, and it is love that constitutes the essential quality and the crowning glory of all true character.

II. The Place of Prophecy. While we are to pursue love we are also to desire spiritual gifts, and chief among them the gift of prophecy. Now this gift is very clearly defined in the next verse. It is not merely or mainly the power which foretells future events, nor is it at all the mission of receiving inspired revelations and adding to the already finished Word of God, but it is a simple and practical ministry of help to men. He defines it by three terms, "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort." In a word, the prophet's business is to build up men, to stir up men and to cheer up sorrowing and troubled hearts.

To edify includes the ministry of instruction. To exhorting belongs the important work of rousing, stimulating and awakening the consciences and hearts of men. This is quite different from unfolding the teachings of the

Scriptures. This is the ministry which convicts men of sin and startles the slumbering conscience into action. This is the ministry which forces the heart and conscience to a sense of its shortcomings and failures. This is the ministry that arouses the will to decision and action for God and for duty. This is the ministry that inspires enthusiasm, stirs up high purposes and calls to noble sacrifice and service. It stands as the living mouthpiece of God, and kindles and sets on fire the truth that has been already unfolded.

Then the third element in prophecy is the ministry of comfort! It binds up the broken heart, it dries the falling tear, it cheers the mourner; it lifts up the depressed and discouraged; it quickens faith, hope and patience; it sends us forth like Barnabas as sons of consolation; it takes healing to the sick, hope to the mourner and opens the gates of heaven to the dying believer. What an attractive ministry is the prophetic office, following in the steps of Him who said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent

Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

III. The Place of Tongues. The gift of tongues represents the less practical and more brilliant enduements of the Spirit in the early Church. It was a divine influence which elevated the soul to a state of ecstasy and found expression in utterance of an elevated character, impressing the hearer with the manifest presence and power of the Holy Ghost in the subject of this influence. But the utterances were not always articulate or intelligible either to the speaker or hearer, and in many cases had to be translated by an interpreter. This gift of interpreting tongues was just as distinct as the tongues themselves, and, where it was lacking, the tongues were not understood, and the message was not immediately helpful to the hearers. Indeed, without a proper regard to edification and decorum it might become a stumbling block and even a cause of confusion and disgrace.

It is quite evident from some of the quotations in this passage that the gift of tongues was not primarily intended to be a vehicle for preaching the Gospel to foreign nations: "He that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries" (v. 2). Surely that is sufficient without any further argument to show that this was not usually a vehicle of intelligent instruction to a foreigner. Again, "He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the Church" (v. 4). Again, "Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying" (v. 5). Here it is evident that there had to be another person to interpret the tongue, or else the man himself might, if he understood his own tongue.

Again, in verse 13 we read, "Wherefore let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret," i. e., let him ask God for a second gift, namely, the gift of translating the tongue in which he has spoken into the tongue

understood by the hearers. Again we read, "If I pray in a tongue my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. . . . How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing that he understandeth not what thou sayest?" (vs. 14, 16.)

The apostle himself had the gift of tongues, but he says with great emphasis, "In the Church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (v. 19). Let us notice carefully, by the way, that the word "unknown" is not in the original, being printed in italics, and that the apostle is not here drawing a distinction between known and unknown tongues, but speaking generally of all tongues as unknown. The whole argument is confirmed and summed up by the statement in the twenty-second verse, "Wherefore tongues are for a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." They are a sign of a definite influence present upon the speaker. But for that very reason they ought to be used with great caution. He illustrates this by a

picture of an unbeliever coming into one of their meetings, when they were speaking with tongues, and concluding that they were mad. But, on the contrary, if he should come in and find them prophesying in intelligent speech he would fall down on his face and worship God, and report that God was in them of a truth. "Therefore," he adds, "if any man speak in a tongue let it be by two, or at the most three, and that by course, and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter let him keep silence in the church, and speak to himself and unto God."

This surely settles the question. If more is needed to be said it would be sufficient to add that the apostle preached the Gospel to the people among whom he moved through the Greek, Latin and Hebrew languages which he had himself acquired, and on one or two occasions his audiences were surprised to find that he could speak their language through the large and liberal culture which he had received.

This gift of tongues being chiefly of the character of a sign, was liable to great abuse and seems to have been early withdrawn from

the primitive Church. In modern times it has been revived, but with some liability to abuse.

The story of Edward Irving is well known. After a career of extraordinary brilliancy and power, in his last days he adopted the theory that the supernatural gifts of the early Church should be claimed in our own day, and there were undoubted instances, not only of miraculous power, but especially in the exercise of the gift of tongues; but through exaggeration of this gift and the strong temptation to use it sensationally, it became a source of much confusion and even ridicule, and a work that had in it undoubted elements of truth and power was discredited and hindered.

In our own day there is the same strained and extravagant attempt to unduly exaggerate the gift of tongues, and some have even proposed that we should send our missionaries to the foreign field under a sort of moral obligation to claim this gift, and to despise the ordinary methods of acquiring a language. Such a movement would end in wild fanaticism and bring discredit upon the truth itself. We know

of more than one instance where our beloved missionaries have been saved from this error and led to prosecute their studies in foreign languages with fidelity and diligence, and their efforts have been rewarded by supernatural help in acquiring foreign tongues in a remarkably short time, but not in despising proper industry and the use of their own faculties under God's direction in acquiring these languages.

IV. The place of edification in the worship of the Church. "Let all things be done unto edification." God's object in everything He does is the practical help and real benefit of His people. God never works a miracle for the sake of showing He can work a miracle. He is a wise economist of force. He has no machinery simply for the purpose of displaying it. When we use any gift in order to show that we have the gift we are desecrating God's sacred trusts. The temptation of today is to the display of brilliancy, and easily runs into self-consciousness, vain glory, and the worship of the creature more than the Creator. The true principle that should regulate all our words and acts, is the glory of God and the

good of our fellowmen. This will give attractiveness and soberity to our words and acts in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The highest ambition that any minister can cherish is to supply plain, wholesome bread to the household of Christ. Let others go in for confectionery and pyrotechnic displays; let ours be the ambition to supply bread to the children of God. There is nothing so popular and so sure to succeed as the simple Gospel and the Word of the living God. Let us aim to reach the average man and leave it to others to attract the intellectual and the brilliant. Christ was a teacher for the common people, and we shall find that His people in every age are still very simple, average people. The Church of Christ today is in danger of becoming a poor rival to the sensational journal and the extravagant modern stage. They can outdo us every time in this unequal competition, and we shall have not only the humiliation of defeat in bidding for the popular ear, but we shall have the displeasure and the curse of heaven for the sacrilegious abuse of an awful trust committed to us for the salvation and help of dying men.

V. The place of testimony in the worship of God. Have we Scriptural warrant for the testimony meeting, for the freedom of a service thrown open to the people and allowing every one to have some part in the chorus of praises and witness bearing? Certainly we have. That is the very meaning of the remarkable verse which we have quoted above (v. 26). "Let every one of you," he says, "have a psalm, have a doctrine, have a revelation." Let every one come to contribute some part to the service. Break in with your chorus of grateful song, if the Spirit so impresses you, and let no one stare or sneer at the irregularity. Come out with your simple testimony of some truth that has helped you, and that you have been told to pass on for the help of others. Fear not to speak the message which the Holy Ghost has burned into your soul for the quickening and the rousing of your brethren. It will be a word in season for some weary soul. And if you have, in some simple form, even the old gift of tongues welling up in your heart, some Hallelujah which you could not

put into articulate speech, some unutterable cry of love or joy, out with it.

I remember a dear old colored saint, now in heaven, who used to accentuate the most important periods and passages in the sermon, or the meeting, by sometimes springing to her feet with a burst of ecstatic overflow that no language could express. It was a sort of inarticulate cry, while her face literally blazed in its ebony blackness with the light of glory. She was simply beating time to one of God's great strains, and while the ear of exquisite taste was sometimes offended, I believe the Holy Ghost was pleased, and the true heart of His Church ought always make room for the artless freedom of the Spirit's voice. There are no monopolies in the Church of Jesus Christ, and reverent faith will always say, like Moses, "Let the Lord speak by whom He will."

VI. The place of order in the worship of the Church. But along with all this we must never forget the reverence and decorum due to the house of God and the services of His sanctuary. "Let all things be done decently and in order" is the apostle's mandate. There

is no need that devotion should run riot or that emotional excitement should carry us off our feet or lead us into extravagance and excesses of mere natural feeling. Let one wait for another. Let there be thoughtful deference and loving consideration. Even if the Spirit does impress you to speak He can wait for a fitting opportunity, and if you are controlled by Him you will wait, too. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." The Holy Spirit does not ride rough-shod over a sanctified judgment and a sensitive courtesy. He always recognizes the rights of others and your own sense of propriety. Some people are afraid to yield themselves to the Spirit for fear He will make them do some crazy thing. He does not act in this way. He has given us an instance of delicacy, modesty, order, self-respect, and He never outrages it in His children. He is a gentle Spirit. He suggests, directs and even commands; but He wants our whole being to work in harmony with Him. A true regard to this would prevent many a rude exhibition of fanaticism or wild fire which are justified too often by the pretence of divine in-

spiration. "Let all things be done decently and in order."

VII. The place of woman in the work of worship of the Church. What right has woman to minister in the Church of Christ, and how far is she restricted by the apostle's guarded regulation?

1. Let it be remembered that in a previous passage (I. Cor. xi. 5) he has already recognized woman's right to prophesy and pray in public, simply requiring her to do it modestly and with simplicity, which was then recognized as her subordinate place as a woman. If, then, he recognized the right of ministry certainly it would be inconsistent to suppose that he withdraws it.

2. Women did exercise many vocations of Christian ministry in the apostolic Church without question. We read of those women that "labored with him in the Gospel," and we know that Phoebe was a deaconess in the church at Cenchrea.

3. Prophesying, which was recognized in First Corinthians xi. 5 as woman's legitimate ministry, including speaking unto men "unto

edification, exhortation and comfort." Therefore, woman's right to speak to men as well as to women for their instruction, quickening and comfort is clearly recognized.

4. What then are the restrictions? Well, it is very certain that she is to so exercise her ministry as not to transcend the limits of modesty and womanly propriety. The wearing of the covering upon her head was the recognition of this in that day, and it simply means, today that she is to act with such reserve that she will never unsex herself or try to take the place of a man.

The apostle distinctly recognizes not her inferiority to man, but her subordination to man. She is man's equal in ability and honor, but she is subordinate to his authority. Just as two judges who sit on the same bench are equal in ability and dignity, but one is the head of the court and the other is a member of it. "The head of every woman is the man, and the head of every man is Christ," the head of Christ is God, and yet Christ is equal to God.

Every modest and sensible woman will clearly recognize the Scriptural principle and save

herself the loss of power that always come from getting out of place.

Further, this was more marked in the case of the wives than of other women. In the relationship of home the woman voluntarily placed herself under the authority of her husband. Rotherham solves the difficulty in this passage by translating the word wife for woman. "Let the wives keep silence in the churches, and if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for the wives to speak in Church." This translation throws much light upon the passage, which is increased by the word "shame," which seems to refer to the social customs of that day, especially the discredit that would attach to woman by bursting through the etiquette of their time. Were a woman in the East today to throw off her veil and appear with uncovered face to the public it would be a shame, and yet it would not be a sin. It would at once, however, brand her as a woman of bad character.

There is yet one more consideration which throws light on this passage. It is the techni-

cal sense of the word Church. It does not mean a church building, which they did not then possess, but it meant the ecclesiastical order, formal assembly of the congregation, and in this view the passage might mean that woman was not to take an official place in the ecclesiastical organization, was not to be one of its elders, its rulers, its ecclesiastical leaders.

But within these modest and reasonable restraints woman has no restriction placed upon her highest usefulness. He who allowed woman of old to be His pre-eminent instrument of witness and blessing to the world, has put no unreasonable barrier in the way of her testimony and service now. She was first to herald the Saviour's resurrection, let her be the first to welcome Him at His advent and to strike the note that shall announce His coming. In a day when woman is not ashamed to expose herself on the indecent stage, and in the wild and riotous revel of modern society, let her not be ashamed to stand for Christ as His loving and faithful witness, and be found when He comes not only with Mary at His feet, but with Anna of Jerusalem, and with the Magdalene

of the resurrection morn going forth with flying feet to tell to men the glad story of His resurrection, ascension and coming again.



THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” I. Cor. xv. 20, 22, 58.



THE fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians presents to us one of the sublimest arguments of the inspired Word for the blessed hope and final destiny of the Church of Christ.

There never was a time when the reality and certainty of this hope needed more to be emphasized than today. While human thought is growing more materialistic, the theology of the Church itself is less and less positive in its testimony to the great doctrine of the resurrection and the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the leading pulpits of the country has publicly declared within a short time that the resurrection is purely spiritual.

Along with the tendency to eliminate the supernatural in every way from Christianity the doctrine of the resurrection is being shaded off into a mere figurative conception.

One of the most deeply spiritual volumes of the century, a book that has been blessed to great multitudes of seekers after God, and which, perhaps, more than any other volume except the Bible has enabled tens of thousands to understand and accept the Lord Jesus in His fulness, is written by one who unhesitatingly denies the doctrine of the literal resurrection, and whose influence in this direction renders it exceedingly difficult to encourage the circulation of her other volumes even where they are without just cause for criticism.

There is no other influence so fitted to counteract the spirit of worldliness abroad to-day as the power of the blessed hope of the Lord's return and all that it is to bring. Our present course of action is greatly determined by our future outlook. An earthly-minded Church will always seek her portion here, and it is only when the people of God are deeply imbued with the conviction and expectation of

their Master's imminent return that they will be saved from the dangers of this present evil world.

This chapter gives us a most comprehensive view of the whole subject of the resurrection as connected with the Gospel of Christ.

I. It gives us a very distinct definition of the Gospel itself. We have no clearer statement anywhere by which we may distinguish between the Gospel and its counterfeits. "I declare unto you the Gospel," is the apostle's language, and he immediately proceeds to tell us what the Gospel is.

First, its fundamental doctrine is that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," and, secondly, that "He arose from the dead the third day and was seen of competent witnesses." These two truths, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, constitute the essence of the Gospel, and anything short of this is not the Gospel. There may be much eloquent preaching, much devotional spirit, much deep earnestness, much profound religious experience, but if it is not identified by the print of the nails and the mark of the cross it is not

the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many of the most popular preachers and writers of our time, according to this definition, are not preachers of the Gospel.

The writer was once offered a very large sum if he could produce a single sentence from the published works of the most popular preacher of this country twenty years ago which, according to Paul's definition, could be called Gospel preaching, and after searching through many volumes he was unable to find a single sentence that would meet the test. These teachings are full of devout passages; they speak freely of Christ; they talk much about His Presence and Spirit—indeed, they are the teachers of the larger Christ and the Christ of today, and all that sort of thing, but somehow they all get into the way without entering by the door. They have climbed up a little beyond the cross. They have much of the rest of it except the beginning; and while it may seem uncharitable and severe, yet the apostle has himself said that they are preaching another gospel; and he has also said, "If any man preach any other gospel let him be accursed."

The Gospel of Jesus Christ recognizes the deep fact of sin, the divine fact of the atonement and the supernatural fact of the resurrection and the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not merely the cross, but it is the cross from which the Crucified has been taken, and beyond which we see the open grave and the ascension throne. It is the cross as beautifully set forth in Thorwaldsen's dream in marble where he has carved the white cross, and then has covered it over with the tracery of a beautiful and luxuriant vine, almost hiding the cross with its hanging clusters. It is the cross with its glorious fruition, the risen Lord and the fruits that have come from His life and death. It is His own sublime description of Himself, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and, lo, I am alive forevermore!"

II. Next we have the cornerstone of the Gospel, the great evidence and proof of Christianity—the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the one foundation on which Paul rests the whole fabric of Christianity. "If Christ be not risen our preaching is in vain; your faith is also vain; ye are yet in your sins." This was

the one test to which the Saviour always appealed when asked for a sign of His Messiahship and divinity. It was the sign of the temple destroyed and raised in three days; the sign of the prophet Jonah, which was just a parable of the resurrection; the sign of the buried corn dying and living through death. He publicly appealed to His Father and the world on the ground of His resurrection. Had He not risen from the dead His claims would have utterly failed, but when we see Him come forth in defiance of every natural and designed obstruction and impossibility, how can we doubt the truth of His claims and His teachings?

God ordered it so that the evidence should be of the most conclusive and unassailable character. His death was public and official. The highest officials of the Roman government were its executioners and witnesses. It was made doubly sure by the thrust of the soldier's spear. The very idea of the resurrection had been anticipated by His enemies and guarded against, and the most stringent precautions were taken to prevent His body being stolen and a story of His resurrection circulated. It was sealed with

the official stamp of the Roman government, and the tomb was guarded by their own soldiers under the eagle eye of the Jewish authorities, who were determined that there should be no possible recovery of the body. And when, notwithstanding all these precautions and provisions, He came forth on the appointed day, and was seen and identified by the multitudes who were alive when Paul's letter was written, and to whom he appealed for confirmation; and when we find no record anywhere of the denial of these statements at the time, or any attempt to question this weighty testimony, every candid mind is forced to admit that the argument for the resurrection is of the strongest possible kind. And if the resurrection be true, then all His teachings and miracles must also be true. The supreme miracle of Christianity carries with it the conviction of all the rest, and so the whole edifice hangs on this great truth, the cornerstone.

The writer was once called upon by a well-informed skeptic, who was a lawyer, accustomed to weigh evidence, and quite doubtful of the truth of Christianity, and was asked to give

to him the most convincing proofs of the truth of the religion of Christ. Instead of attempting a long and discursive discussion of apologetics he simply told him that there was a single argument by which the whole question might be settled, and if that were true all the others were unnecessary. He offered to rest the entire case upon the one fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And then he submitted to cross-examination on that subject, giving the data furnished by the New Testament and other contemporary literature, and permitted this skilled legal mind to ask whatever questions he wished in the course of cross-examination, and satisfy himself as fully as he would before a judge or jury.

After two hours spent in this way the gentleman took his leave, promising to investigate the argument in detail, and return in a fortnight and give his decision. He returned according to appointment, and immediately acknowledged that the argument was convincing; that he had no doubt whatever of the truth of Christianity, and that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was established as fully as the laws of

evidence could reasonably require. But he immediately added that he was not yet a Christian, and he felt that he was no more willing to become one even since he had accepted the truth of Christianity. He found the objection was moral as well as intellectual, and he realized he was not willing to accept the sacrifices required by a true Christian life. Years afterward he repeated the same statement, still believing in Christianity, but personally an unbeliever in Christ as His own Saviour.

This is the high place the apostle gives the doctrine of the resurrection. It would be wise if, instead of endeavoring to meet unbelief with our speculations and reasonings, we would stand more simply and securely on the old apostolic testimony, "This Jesus hath God raised up whereof we are witnesses."

III. All this is preliminary, however, to the great theme of the chapter, namely, the hope of our resurrection. For Christ's resurrection is the pledge of ours, and our resurrection is the precious hope that dispels the darkness of the grave, and illuminates the future with all the glory that shines from His exaltation. And

while He is the pledge of our resurrection, He is its pattern, too, and as He is so shall we be when He shall appear.

In his long and majestic argument for the resurrection he covers a wide field, and it can only be briefly summarized within these limits.

1. He tells us that it is not obscurely hinted at even in the analogy of nature. The seed that we plant in our garden and that springs out of the grave and develops its life out of death is a parable of the resurrection. The great Faraday, standing before an immense audience and dissolving a jewel of gold in a powerful acid, and then by another acid precipitating it and bringing it back, and then molding it into a more beautiful form and presenting it to the audience, was but giving them a little analogy of the resurrection as set forth in the processes of science. If man can do this much with an inert metal, how much more can God do with the human body formed for His glory and destined to immortality?

2. The resurrection is not our natural birth-right, but it comes to us through our union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Head of hu-

manity. There are two human races passing along the course of time. One is the race of Adam, the other the race of Jesus Christ. One was born from our fallen father; the other has been begotten out of the heart of the Son of God. From one we inherit death; from the other life. "As is the earthly such are they also that are earthy; as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly; and, as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. As all who are in Adam die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Receiving from Him a new spiritual life and a new physical life in embryo it becomes the deathless seed of a more glorious life, which will burst from the tomb as the blossoms of the spring burst forth from the ground and unfold amid the imperishable glories of the summer-land on high.

Beloved, which race do you belong to? Which nature have you received? Which life are you developing, the Adam or the Christ?

3. The figure of baptism is introduced in the twenty-ninth verse, "Those that were baptized for the dead," no doubt, simply mean those that

were baptized as a symbol of death. Baptism is the especial sign of death and resurrection, and this very ordinance of Christianity has no significance and is but a delusive mockery if so be the dead rise not.

4. The order of the resurrection is very clearly unfolded (verses 23-28). "Christ, the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming, then cometh the end."

There are three stages of the resurrection. The first is personal. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself, the Lone Conqueror of the grave, as He stands at the open tomb, the first begotten from the dead.

The second stage is coming when those that sleep in Jesus shall be raised and the living translated into His glorious image. Not before are we to expect our resurrection. The departed dead are waiting the simultaneous hour when they shall all alike be lifted from their long sleep in the dust, and shall put on their robes of resurrection life and gather with Him in the air.

Then there is a third stage at the end when His millennial reign shall be over, when He

shall have accomplished His victorious plan, and put all enemies under His feet; then shall the wicked dead come forth, and death itself be destroyed, and cast into the lake of fire to slay no more the children of our race.

5. The glory of the resurrection is very clearly set forth in the natural analogy. He draws a splendid contrast between the bare corn that you put in the soil and the glorious harvest that crowns it on the golden field. As that harvest is much greater than the little seed that died, or as that splendid tree with its luxuriant foliage, its rich bloom and its abundant fruit is immeasurably more than the little dry seed from which it sprang, so shall our resurrection body surpass the earthly form that was laid down in corruption, dishonor and weakness. It shall come forth in all the glory of His resurrection, and share all His mental endowments and His perfect physical powers, and enter into the lordship of creation which was the inheritance of man at the first, and is given back in the Son of man and in the new creation.

IV. The practical application of this blessed hope. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye

steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Three things will follow a realizing faith and hope of the Lord's coming.

First, we will be steadfast in the faith. We will stand firm in these days of doubt and disbelief, and take heed that we may be able to say at last, "I have kept the faith."

Next, we shall be immovable from the right. We will walk the narrow path. We will keep our garments spotless. We will watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. We will be firm amid the seductions of the world, the flesh and the devil, and we will stand with girded loins, and spotless robes, and shining lamps, awaiting His coming.

Thirdly, we will be busy in His service, and occupied in holy activities to prepare the world for His coming, to finish what He has given us to do, to lead others to the partnership of this blessed hope, and especially to carry forth the invitations to the wedding, send out the Gospel to the world, proclaim the witness to all the nations, gather out a people for His name from

every country and tribe and tongue, and thus haste His coming and prepare His way. This will be our joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of Christ at His coming. Thus we are laying up our treasures yonder, and life is being invested in the glorious possibilities and prospects of the ages to come and the kingdom which shall never pass away. Let us then be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," for "we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord."



THE LORD'S DAY.

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay him in store, as God hath prospered him.” I. Cor. xvi. 2.

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.” Rev. i. 10.



MENTION of this unique epistle of the Church would not be complete without an authoritative reference to the sacred and important institution of the Christian Sabbath so inseparably associated with the worship and fellowship of the Church of Christ. As we have seen in the case of several other themes discussed in this epistle, there are two extremes between which the truth is to be found; the extreme on the one side of unlimited license and the utter secularizing of the Sabbath day; on the other a return to the spirit of legalism and disposition to Judaize the Christian Sabbath, and insist upon the observance of the seventh day as essential to its true meaning and divine character. There is a widespread propagand-

ism abroad among the churches which would throw around this sweet and holy Christian institution the shadows of Mount Sinai, and which would make the mere question of the seventh day a principle of cardinal importance and, indeed, the very central point of our faith and testimony. It is most unwholesome to elevate any subordinate question to so supreme a place of importance, and it is very necessary that God's people should be guarded against misrepresentations and misconceptions which otherwise would bring their consciences into bondage and detach them from the true center of faith and testimony to what may easily become a mere side issue. Let us, therefore, endeavor to trace the true Scriptural doctrine of the Sabbath through the various dispensations.

I. The Sabbath is a primeval institution as old as creation. Its supreme authority does not rest upon Mosaic law, but it has come down itself from Eden and is as old as the human race, the institution of marriage and the first promise of redemption. It was given for man, and not for any single race of men. It was given

for rest and refreshment, and not for bondage and ceremonial observances merely. It was given because it recognizes an essential need in human nature, and even races that have not known the beneficent teachings of the Bible have been led to institute appropriate times of rest and relaxation as a necessity of the constitution of man.

It is essential in considering this subject that we always recognize the earlier institution of the Sabbath because this at once lifts the character and claims of the day above all questions connected with Jewish law. Even the fourth commandment, which reinstated the Sabbath, distinctly recognizes its prior existence by using the words, "Remember the Sabbath Day." Speaking of another matter, the covenant made with Abraham for his seed, the apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians brings out an important principle, that the law, which came centuries later, could not annul the previous covenant or make it of non-effect. The primary institution stands, notwithstanding any later and more legal and special commands which may have been added to it. So

the Sabbath of creation stands, notwithstanding all that may have been supplemented for the Jewish people and the Mosaic dispensation at Sinai. This lifts this sacred day to a lofty height, and a universal scope that cannot be claimed for any of the older institutions of the Mosaic system. This blessed memorial of the crowning of creation comes down to us with the sweetness, the beneficence, the liberty, and love of unfallen Eden, and heaven's first smile over a newborn world.

II. We next recognize the Sabbath as a Mosaic institution. It was taken up by the great Lawgiver, and re-enacted for God's peculiar people with all the lawful sanctions of that fiery law. Its observance was most rigidly specified and enforced. Its desecration was punished with death. It became as much a law of fear as a law of love, and while still retaining its ancient purpose yet it suffered inevitably the peculiar touches and tints of that dark dispensation. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by

faith." The law was essentially educational, temporary and a ministry of condemnation. It was designed to impress the human conscience with the supreme authority of God, and the awful nature and effects of sin. It was fitted to reveal man's depravity and disobedience, to produce conviction of sin and to drive a guilty conscience to the Lord Jesus Christ and the grace of the Gospel for relief. It was intended or fitted to be permanent. While it contains the elements of the highest and purest morality, while its essential principles are holy and divine, yet its modus and its spirit are essentially legal and engendering to bondage, and God never meant the sweet and holy Sabbath to come down to us in New Testament times associated only with restrictions, severities and shadows of Mount Sinai. For a time they gathered around it, but they have passed away, and it stands out in the clear sunlight of its ancient institution and its yet higher Christian significance.

As has been beautifully expressed in metaphorical language, it is like that same Mount Sinai, where it was re-enacted three thousand

years ago. For days that lofty mountain had stood on the Arabian plain, with its clear summit piercing the sky and crowned with the cloudless sunlight of the heavens. Suddenly there gathered around it a dark and dreadful stormy cloud, lurid with awful lightnings, and rending the earth and air with its thunders of threatening judgment, and for a time the Mount was lost to view in the enshrouding clouds of smoke and flame. So the Sabbath rose through the Patriarchal age like that sunlit mountain until at length it became enwrapped in the shadows and the awful threatenings of Mount Sinai. But after a while Sinai's shadows passed away. The fearful cloud, with its smoke and flame, ceased to hang around its awful brow. The camp of Israel moved forward, and the sunshine again bathed the mountain's crown; so Judaism, too, has passed away, and left the Sabbath in the clear and beautiful light of its first beautiful dawning upon the new created world. Nay, there has come a new and brighter light, for now there is shining around it the glory of the resurrection, and it is not merely the memorial

of creation, but it is the sign and seal of a new creation. Jesus canceled for us the curse through the cross, opened the grave of doomed humanity, gave to us life and immortality through the Gospel, and made the Sabbath for us the hallowed type of the rest of faith into which we enter now and the still sweeter, everlasting rest which remaineth for the people of God.

Beloved, don't let us go back to Judaism; don't let us get bound by the entanglements of the law; don't let us take the Sabbath back three thousand years, and blot out the light of the open grave and the new creation. It is not necessary in order to honor it that we should bind ourselves with the yoke of bondage which our fathers were not able to bear. Let us move on with the dispensation, let us live in the light of the Gospel, and let us take the Sabbath from the hands of our risen Lord and our reconciled Father.

III. We now come to the third stage of the observance of the Sabbath, namely, the Sabbath as once more re-enacted under the New Testament dispensation.

Now it is well to notice that God had already been preparing the minds and hearts of His people for a very radical change with the incoming of the new covenant. He told them He was not going to deal with them according to the covenant that He had made with their fathers, but He was to enter upon the covenant of grace in which love, forgiveness and liberty were to take the place of constraint, bondage and selfish effort. Very distinctly and repeatedly the old prophets intimated that there was to be such a change in the new creation, that the old heavens and the old earth should come no more into mind, and that all old things should pass away and all things be made new (Isa. lxx. 17).

When the Lord Jesus appeared we find Him at once facing the Sabbath question, and we notice two distinct attitudes which He takes from the beginning. The first is a positive recognition of the Sabbath as one of the institutions which He assumed and incorporated into His kingdom and took under His direction and authority. "The Son of man," He says, "is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark ii. 28. In the

parallel passage in Matthew xii. 1-8, He assumes still more authoritative direction of this day; and, after citing several Old Testament precedents for a proper freedom in the observance of the day, as, for example, in the case of David and the priests themselves, who were obliged to minister in the many manual services, He then adds the strong expression of His authority to deal with the Sabbath supremely: "But I say unto you that in this place is one greater than the temple, for the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day." The Lord Jesus Christ thus distinctly recognizes the Sabbath, but, on the other hand, He as distinctly set His face against the severe Jewish conception of it, and from the very beginning insisted upon the new construction of its meaning and a new charter of liberty and beneficence in its observance.

He openly defied the prejudices of the people by walking through the cornfields on the Sabbath day and allowing His disciples to pluck the ears of corn. He healed the man with the withered hand when He knew they were waiting to watch Him and condemn Him for it.

He met their prejudices with the keenest

sense of showing the inhumanity and cruelty of straining their conventional ideas to the extent of allowing a poor brute to lie in a ditch rather than break the Sabbath, and He most distinctly lay down the law that true Sabbath observance always carries along with it a spirit of thoughtful love which would not hesitate to perform any work of real necessity or mercy. While He recognized the Sabbath as an institution of Christianity, He also recognized His right to change it and set it free from all that was peculiar to the transitory system of Judaism that had encrusted around it. Not in any sudden or formal propaganda of a new Sabbath law did He startle and shock even His disciples, but gently He allowed a new character and significance of the day to grow up out of incidents and events as He allowed almost all the important acts and ordinances of His kingdom to develop out of the circumstances that gave them birth.

The Gospel did not start out as a rigid system of theology laying down cardinal principles and enacting written laws like the Mosaic economy, but it grew out of living facts so that

every institution and ordinance of Christianity has behind it an incident rather than a proclamation. Even the Lord's Supper grew out of the farewell meeting of Christ with His disciples. The very assemblies of Christianity evolved themselves out of the simple gatherings of the apostles. The government of the Christian Church was not laid down in any text book or manual of laws, but evolved gradually out of the history of the early Church. So it was with the Sabbath and its important changes. He wanted it to spring spontaneously in their hearts as the new memorial of something dearer than even the deliverance from Egypt, or the first creation, and so keeping ever before their minds the great fact of His coming resurrection as the central point of the Christian faith and hope He ordered that glorious event to come, not on the Jewish Sabbath, which was not fitted to signalize it, for it marked rather the end of things than the beginning of a new series of glorious events which run through eternal ages.

Having thus struck the new keynote He prolonged it by arranging His meetings with

them after His resurrection on the same day. Again and again He marked it by coming back to them on the first day until they quickly took the hint and in a far sweeter way than if it had been a rigid commandment, and as often as it returned it found them waiting for His coming until it came to be to them the memorial day of faith and love, and doubtless it was then that the name was attached to it, which we find afterwards repeated by John from the lonely isle of Patmos, "the Lord's Day."

So identified was the hallowed day with the resurrection of Christ that in the early Church the customary salutation on the first day morning always was, "The Lord has risen indeed."

Thus two beautiful ordinances were linked together as comparison pictures: the Lord's Supper, representing Calvary, and the Lord's Day, representing the resurrection. Established thus by such beautiful and repeated precedents it is not strange that we find the early Church after His ascension still coming together on the same day. For a time their continuous Pentecostal blessing swept all days into

one great tidal wave of blessing, but when things settled down to their normal condition they began to assemble on this day for religious worship, fellowship, and especially the observance of the Lord's Supper; and so we find in the twentieth chapter of Acts, verse seven, like a glint of sunshine on a stormy sea, the picture of one of these meetings. In a chain of evidence one fact is as good as a thousand. It shows what the habit of the disciples was. The sea captain often traverses the whole Atlantic with just one observation from the heavens, and this single beam of light is enough to illumine the whole practice of the early Church. Here they had come together, not by special summons, because Paul was there, but to break bread according to their usual custom to keep the Lord's Supper. It was their stated time of worship, and Paul himself had waited through the week for this very day to come, and when it came it was so precious that he just spent the whole day and half the whole night with them in teaching and preaching; and before the time was over God had honored that wondrous New Testament Sabbath with the

opening of the gates of death and the bringing back of a soul from the world of spirits.

So likewise our present text is just such another glimpse of the light revealing the usual practice of the Church. The apostle tells us here (I. Cor. xvi. 1) that it was not an accidental thing that they should thus observe the first day, but he had given order to this effect to the churches of Galatia and he repeated the order to them. It had now become a New Testament institution, and as he founded the first churches and established their order this was the order that was settled. They were to come together on this day and mark it by their offerings for the work of the Gospel.

One other glimpse of the light shines through the dimness (Rev. i. 10), where we find the apostle John going apart on this same day and the Holy Ghost recognizing it, and the Lord Jesus making a personal visit from the heavens and giving to his aged servant the apocalyptic vision of the coming ages and the kingdom of glory.

Do we want more light? Does not love know how to take a hint? Is not the Sabbath

sweeter to Christ as the quick response of our spontaneous love than as a mere matter of rigid ordinance? It would seem as if Jesus wanted it to spring up with this sort of freedom from all the associations fitted to make it so dear, and if His sweet example and the example of the early Church and all the sacred associations of the day are not enough for this spontaneous observance, the heart of love must be cold and dull indeed.

But, further, we know that our Lord gave to His disciples a great many commandments which have not come to us in categorical form. The apostle John and other apostles tell us that during the forty days He spoke to them in detail all things concerning the kingdom of God, and commanded them to teach the Church to observe these things. John also tells us that if all the things which He said were written the world would not contain the books that should be written. Doubtless, therefore, in these intervening days He gave them specific directions about the Sabbath, as well as the government of the Church, and many other things respecting which we have no specific

word from His lips. But we have the example of the apostles, we have the pattern they set, we have the things they did, and we know they must have had the authority of His Word for all these things, so that their acts come to us with the authority of His commands.

It is interesting to add one or two supplementary considerations in connection with the change of the day, which is, at the present time, being made the subject of much needless discussion and distraction among simple-minded Christians.

The first day of the week was really the day most signally honored in the Old Testament. Circumcision occurred on the eighth day, which was the first day of the second week. It was intended thus to be a special type of the new creation, and the new life which Christ was to bring. The great day of the Jewish feasts was usually the eighth day, which, of course, was the first day of the second series. The Jubilee happened on the year after the series of sevens, after seven Sabbatic periods of years, making forty-nine; then came the fiftieth year which was the first of the new series,

which was the gladdest, grandest day in all their cycles, typifying thus the new beginning which Christ was to bring in the coming ages.

Furthermore, it is a fact that the first day Adam ever spent on earth was really the Sabbath. He was created on earth just at the end of the sixth day, and as the days began at six in the evening he must have been immediately ushered into the Sabbath. The first sun that ever rose upon him was a Sabbath sun; and really the first day was the Sabbath day.

It may not be important to observe that according to the laws of longitude there is a difference of an entire day in the circuit of the globe. Were you to travel from here by way of England to China and back to San Francisco you would have gained an entire day, and when you got back to San Francisco it would be Sunday for you while the people in the United States would still be keeping Saturday. What are you going to do in such a case? Suppose you had a Sabbath law compelling the keeping of the Sabbath day, here is one section of the world keeping the first day and another the seventh. This alone is sufficient to

show that the whole question of numerical days is impossible. It is the principle of one day in seven that God requires, and it is the association of that day now, not with the law of Moses, nor even the creation of the universe, but the glorious new creation and resurrection of our Saviour from the dead.

One other consideration will suffice. The very idea of the Old Testament was work first, and then rest as its recompense. It was therefore proper that their Sabbath should come at the end of the week. But the very idea of Christianity is rest first and then work. We work not for life, but from life. We have entered into His rest and ceased from our works, and then we go to work with a new zeal, liberty and power. To go back to the old principle would be the reversing of the wheels of the dispensations and the denying of the very essential principles of the Gospel of Grace.

In connection there are three thoughts that may well be fastened on our hearts as we leave this subject.

1. Let the Sabbath be to us, more than it has been, the memorial of the resurrection, and let

it ever lift us to a high and heavenly plane of our life in the risen and ascended One.


2. Let it be to us God's memorial and message of the rest of faith. Let it remind us that the true Sabbath is one of the heart, the everlasting rest of the Christ who is within us through the ceasing from our own works and entering into His, and thus finding the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

3. Let the Sabbath claim our loving observance and our watchful regard, not merely through the sanctions of a law, but from the impulse of the deepest love. There are some things God asks of us, not merely because they are commanded, but because they are our instinctive delight. He did not tell Mary to pour out the treasures of her alabaster vase. He would not have praised her so much if He had been obliged to tell her. What He loved in her was that she had instinct enough to understand His approaching death, and delicacy enough to think for herself of this graceful expression of her faith and love. The very spontaneousness of it was its charm. So He wants us to keep the Sabbath sacred and holy,

not because we would be stoned if we do not do so, but because it is like a wife's honor, a mother's name, a thing too sacred to be dragged on earth's common places. It is like the best room in the family. You don't use it to put your work-bench in it and your kitchen-pots. You don't wash the dishes there, and put away the ash barrels and garbage cans; but you keep it for the family reunion, for the visit of cherished friends, for the sanctuary of the household and the heart. This is the place of the Sabbath. Let us keep it clean. Let us keep it sacred. Let us keep it sweet. Not because we have to, but because we love to and it brings to us the memorial of a cloudless evening and the remembrance of an Easter dawn, and the blessed hope of that sweet morn whose dawn shall break on a deathless, sinless, tearless world.

THE SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH OR THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUE SPIRITUAL GIVING.

“Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. I. Cor. xvi. 1-3.

 HIS manual of Church principles and polity would not be complete without a statement of the Scriptural method of finance and God's plan for supporting His Church. The ancient tabernacle was borne by the Levites on their shoulders, and God has provided that His Church should be sustained by the offerings of His people. Many false methods are abroad, and Christ is often dishonored by the appeals of His Church to an ungodly world, and the compromises that her rulers often make for the sake of securing the mercenary gifts of unholy men.

This subject is discussed by the apostle at still greater length in the eighth and ninth chapters of the second epistle to the Corinthians, and in the following discussions we shall first briefly outline the points brought out in the present passage, and then more fully unfold the comprehensive and exhaustive treatment of the whole subject in the longer passage in the second epistle.

I. The divine law of giving. He speaks of the matter here as an order which he has given to the churches of Galatia, and which he now reenacts in the church at Corinth. The subject of giving formed part of an elaborate system under the Mosaic law. It was not a mere matter of caprice, but it was regulated by the most positive and binding ordinances. God's ancient people were required to give what practically amounted to almost three-tenths of their income for the support of the priesthood and the service of the tabernacle, and for the great national feasts, and so long as they were faithful to these ordinances and claims of their covenant God they were never found to be a burden, but

increasing prosperity rewarded their liberality and obedience.

It is generally supposed that giving in the New Testament is left entirely to the impulse and good will of the individual Christian. This is excused under the plea of the larger freedom of the Gospel. Now, surely, if the grace of God has advanced with the advent of the Christian age, and we are living in a larger dispensation of privilege and blessing, surely the Christian liberty of the new dispensation should lead to a larger beneficence and a nobler liberality than the bondage of the law. It would be a shame, surely, if we should content ourselves with giving one-tenth of our income, or even three-tenths as they did. More fitting is it that our love and liberty should give all. And yet, the fact is, that the average gifts of the people of God today do not begin to amount to a single tenth of their actual revenues. Three-tenths of the income of the people of God in this country alone would give us sufficient revenue to evangelize the whole world in a few years.

The New Testament Church, however, is not left without a definite law on the subject of

giving. The "order" which Paul gave to the churches of Galatia and Corinth is still binding upon us, and no Christian can expect God's blessing to rest on the spirit of stinginess and selfishness. It is still as true as ever, that "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver," and "he that watereth shall find his own soul watered" in return.

II. The divine method of giving. "On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store." This clearly suggests systematic beneficence. It is not to be a matter of caprice or random impulse, but it is to be done regularly and periodically. It is to be done even when there is no urgent need appealing for help and no cause in distress addressing its claims to our sympathy. We are to have a fund always available for the Lord's claims and the Lord's cause. While we are to recognize all we spend even upon ourselves and our families as spent for Him, we are to take a proper proportion of it, and set it aside to be available whenever needed for the special needs of the Lord's work.

The advantages of this system are obvious. It prevents mere giving through excitement or

haste. It makes our beneficence deliberate and conscientious, and it provides a fund which is always available, and which only makes it necessary for us to determine where the greatest need is. It is delightful to receive letters, as we often do, with such statements as this: "I have some of the Lord's money, and I believe He wants it to go for China," or "for Africa," as the case may be. This makes us stewards and trustees of what the Lord commits to our keeping, and "co-workers together with Him."

The fact that it was to be offered on the Lord's day gives the transaction a distinctly sacred character, and makes it an act of worship quite as much as our praises and our prayers. How different this from some of the ordinary methods of so-called Christian societies to extort their needed financial supplies through the devices of the auction mart, the produce exchange, or the theatre, or, still lower, the cheap restaurant.

III. The standard of Christian giving. "As God hath prospered you." This is intended as a definite recognition of the fact that everything we have belongs to God, and our offering

is just the tribute of glad acknowledgment of His proprietary right to us and all we call our own.

The expression, "That there be no gatherings when I come," is a very suggestive hint that Christian giving should be so conscientious and deliberate that it would not need to be stimulated by special appeals or public excitement. Indeed, the apostle seemed desirous of having no appearance of his seeking their gifts. He wished rather the whole impression of his visit to be spiritual, and their offering to be so entirely spontaneous that it would be complete before his arrival.

IV. The administration of the gifts of God's people. Careful provision is here made for the financial administration of Christ's Church. The donors are to have the privilege of selecting the one that shall administer their gifts. "Whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem." He recognized the importance of the utmost care in the administration of the business of Christ's cause and the avoidance of all possible blame. It is most important that

those who are entrusted with the gifts of Christ's people should see to it that they are administered economically, honestly, and with the most conscientious regard to their accomplishing in the most effective way the purpose of the donors and the benefit of the cause of Christ.

Passing now to the larger discussion of this subject in the second epistle we are gratified to find the whole subject is developed with the utmost completeness and attractiveness, reducing almost to a science the principles of Christian beneficence.

1. The high place of giving is first recognized. It is called "a grace," and is classed with "faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence, and love," and pressed upon them as one of the fruits of the Spirit and the essential graces of the Christian character. We may be fervid in our religious emotions, and ardent in our expressions of consecration, but if we are stingy and selfish it will detract from everything. The lack of the grace of giving is a fatal blemish upon our Christian character.

2. The divine motive of giving. "Ye know

the grace of the Lord Jesus, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty, might be rich." This is the supreme motive, the sacrifice and love of Jesus Christ. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." This is the watchword of all true beneficence. After Calvary nothing is too costly for Him. . The very figure by which the sacrifice of Christ is here expressed as an impoverishing of Himself is unspeakably tender and appropriate, and after such a spectacle, we may well say of any sacrifice, as a dying Christian woman once said to us of the sacrifice of her life and her dearest ones, "It is little to give for Him."

3. The deep source of Christian giving—our own personal consecration. "This they did not, as we hoped, but first gave their own selves unto the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." The gifts of these saints began in self-giving. Nothing is of value to God that does not bear the marks of divine ownership, and it is vain to look for the support of Christ's cause to half-hearted Christians. Let there be an entire surrender to Him, and the offerings of a few con-

secrated Christians will outweigh all that the wealth of millions could do. Our Christian efforts must not begin at the pockets of people, but at their hearts. Slay the idol of self, and the treasures of our beneficence will be sufficient to save the world.

Once in India a British officer gave orders that a heathen idol should be smashed to pieces. The priests resisted long and obstinately, but at last the order was fulfilled, and, lo! as the idol fell in shattered fragments, a great flood of golden coins poured out amid the ruins! Slay the idol of self, we again repeat it, and the treasures will be enough to evangelize all the earth.

4. The crowning glory of Christian giving, namely, sacrifice. "In a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality, for to their power I bear record, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves." So strongly does the apostle express this overflow of love that he ruins his grammar to give utterance to his thought, and uses the hyperbole, "the superabundance of their joy, and

their deep destitution, superabounded unto the riches of their liberality." Giving reaches its climax in sacrifice, and sacrifice reaches its fulness in a joy that does not feel the sacrifice, for we read of superabounding joy side by side with superabounding giving. Sacrifice is worth nothing until it ceases to be sacrifice, and giving never reaches its blossom until it runs over into the sacrifice of joy. "Giving," as has been well said, "until it hurts, and then giving until it doesn't hurt."

5. The true spirit of Christian giving—perfect voluntariness. "They were willing of themselves" (v. 3). And again, "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath and not according to that he hath not" (v. 12). What God looks at is the intention and the heart. He sees the throbbing love that prompts the gift, and he often sees the still deeper love that weeps because it has nothing to give; and He counts the will for the deed, and says, as He did of old, of another of His servants, "It is well that it was in thine heart." These Corinthian Christians had so longed to give that they had even ventured to

pledge their offerings before they had the power to give them, and God had accepted the pledge and had now enabled them to make it good in actual performance. Therefore, He reminds them in the next place of

6. The necessity of conscientiousness in the performance of our purposes and the fulfillment of our pledges. "Now, therefore," he says, "perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so that there may be a performance also out of that which you have." It is most important that our giving be conscientious and honest, and that we be careful not to let our purposes and promises be easily forgotten, or lightly excused, for God does not forget them; and He takes great delight in our conscientious fidelity to these things, and our keeping faith with Him as strictly as we would with a fellow being in any matter of a common and business interest.

7. The principle of proportionate giving. "For I mean not that other men be eased and ye burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, and that their abundance also may

be a supply for your want, that there may be equality: as it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack." This is the principle of true Christian communism. God does not always require you to hand your money over absolutely to some other man to be the trustee and agent of your beneficence, but He may want you to retain your money, and still act as His steward and trustee; but in so doing be very sure that you are not transgressing this divine law of proportion. Your abundance is to be the supply for the want of some other, and if you can hold that abundance and see the cause of Christ in distress and extremity, your heart is not responsive to the life and touch of your living Head. For "if one member suffers all must suffer, and if one rejoices all should rejoice together."

We believe this lesson is yet to be learned by the wealthy members of Christ's Church. We most fully believe that if there were more business men today who would accept the trust of becoming the dispensers of God's money, absolutely at God's bidding, that He would surely

place in the hands of some of these men the millions which now are consumed wholly in selfishness and greed, and give them the divine joy of seeing the world evangelized and the Lord's immediate coming brought nigh.

8. The administration of the gifts of God's people. This subject is again presented in this passage, and the apostle shows with delicate tact how careful he was to have it, "that no man should blame him in the abundance which was administered by him, providing honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." He tells them about Titus, who is to administer this fund, reminding them that "his praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches," and he informs them of the appointment of the other officers also who have been chosen by the various churches to travel with him and carry these offerings. Nothing can be finer than the thoughtful consideration here given to every question affecting the confidence of the people of God in all things.

9. The beautiful fruition of Christian giving. First, it bears fruit in blessing to the giver. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also

sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound unto every good work." This undoubtedly refers to temporal prosperity. Some people think that all the promises of this kind belong to the Old Testament. That is not so. God's promise to reward the liberal giver is just as true as it ever was. Still "he that withholdeth more than is meet" will find that "it tendeth to poverty," and "the liberal soul will be made fat." If we use God's gifts honestly and generously for God's glory He will prosper us and enlarge our power to give more.

Again, not only will it bring prosperity to the giver, but it will bring him abundant usefulness, or, as the apostle expresses it so forcibly in the tenth verse, as happily translated by Rotherham, "He who supplies seed to him who is sowing and bread for eating, will supply and multiply your seed and cause to grow the products of your righteousness." Thus you shall have a partnership in the work of him whom you sustain. You shall be a sharer in his joy,

in his fruit, in the work he does and the souls he saves. Thus, although you may never set your feet on heathen shores, some day there will come trooping to your side the swarthy children of distant continents, and will hail you as the instrument that led them into the blessed hopes and privileges of the Gospel.

One other blessed effect of your giving will be the prayers that will ascend to God for you from those you help. It is a blessed thing to have the prayers of God's children follow us, and this is peculiarly the privilege of those who help others. They come surrounded with the intercession that holds them ever to the heart of God, and becomes a channel of unspeakable blessing to their lives.

10. The glory that redounds to God from our giving. The apostle speaks here of the thank-givings that go up to God on account of the gifts of His people, and the glory that redounds to His name through the multiplied fruits of our beneficence. As God Himself is the great Giver, so He has made it the law of the universe that we can only reach the highest blessing through the love that gives.

Abraham could not enter into the fulness of his covenant until he had laid his all upon the altar of Moriah. Moses could not become the leader of Israel until his mother had given him unreservedly away in the floating ark of sacrifice amid the weeds of the Nile. Samuel, the great reformer, was a mother's sacrificial gift. The temple of Solomon was reared on a site that had already been the scene of Isaac's sacrifice, and which David insisted on buying and paying for; for, he said, "Shall I give to the Lord that which costs me nothing?" The first Old Testament miracle of resurrection from the dead came to one who had already given her last morsel of meal and her last drop of oil at the prophet's bidding. The great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand started in the gift of a little lad, who gave up his lunch in the lone wilderness that others might be fed. Among the last and sweetest words ever spoken by our Saviour was His commendation of the woman that gave the alabaster box with its precious ointment for love of Him; and the other woman who poured her all into the treasury, and received a crown of recognition

greater than all the magnificent largesses of the rich and proud could ever have claimed.

The most solemn judgment upon the Pentecostal Day was upon two people who did not give honestly to God, and the most distinguished example of apostolic ministry was the noble Barnabas, who laid down his all at the apostle's feet, and became the son of consolation and the princely pattern of consecrated business men for all time.

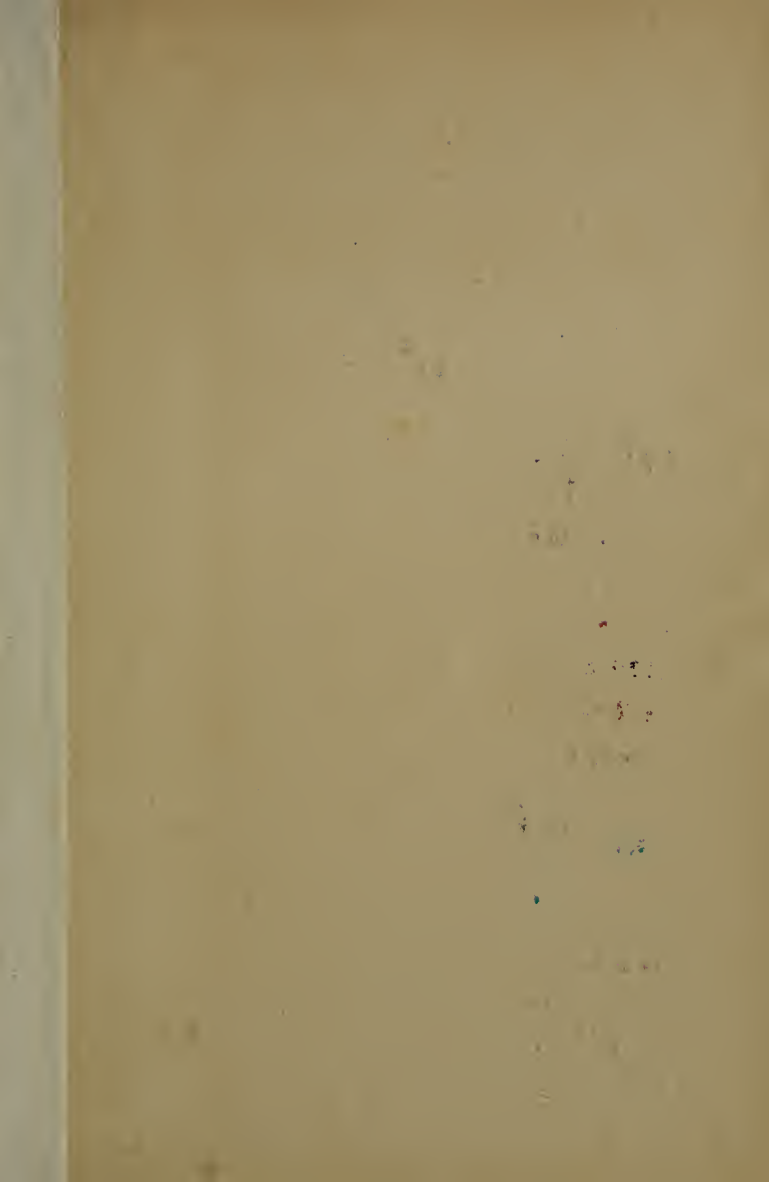
In the closing days of the Restoration period the poor captives in Babylon sent an offering to their brethren in Jerusalem, who were laboring to rebuild the temple. As soon as it came God commanded that the gold should be fashioned into crowns, bearing perhaps the names of the donors, and that these should be hung up in the temple of the Lord as memorials of the gift and perhaps worn some day by the givers as the acknowledgment of their noble sacrifice and glorious recompense. So our gifts are taken by our blessed Master, and melted into crowns to be placed first upon the head of our Lord Himself, who alone is worthy of all the glory, and perhaps to be worn on the

coronation day by those who loved and sacrificed for Him below.

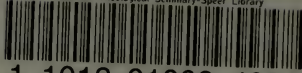
Oh, that we may be saved from the blight of selfishness! Oh, for the blessedness and glory of self-renouncing love and sacrifice!

God Himself is always giving,
Loving is the truest living,
Letting go is twice possessing;
Would you double every blessing?





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